THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor : R. PALME DUTT

Volume 18 November. 1936 Number 11

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

After Edinburgh — R. P. D.

The Labour Party Conference — HAROLD J. LASKI

Labour and Rearmament — J. R. CAMPBELL

Is Palestine Prosperous? — BRITISH RESIDENT

The English Tradition — R. PAGE ARNOT

Book Reviews

A. J. CUMMINGS DR. JANET VAUGHAN
GEORGE ALLISON WILLIAM PAUL

etc.

PRICE SIXPENCE

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

VOLUME 18 NOVEMBER, 1936 NUMBER 11

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

CONTENTS

Notes of the Month - - - - - - - Page 651
AFTER EDINBURGH
By R. P. D.

The Labour Party Conference at Edinburgh - ,, 665
By HAROLD J. LASKI

Labour and Rearmament - - - - - - ,, 672
By J. R. Campbell

Is Palestine Prosperous? - - - - - - ,, 683
By BRITISH RESIDENT

The English Tradition - - - - - - ,, 693
By R. PAGE ARNOT

Book Reviews - - - - - - - - - ,, 701
"Steel Battalion" - - - *By* A. J. CUMMINGS
A Liberal Exposes Italian Fascism - - *By* L.W.
Lenin the Pathfinder - - *By* WILLIAM PAUL
The Health of the Mother *By* DR. JANET VAUGHAN
A Still Dominant Type - - - - *By* W.R.
A Challenge to Prison Reformers *By* GEORGE ALLISON
Scrap the "Smaller House" System - *By* H.R.

The Financial Position - - - - - - ,, 711

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Labour Monthly

Editorial and Publishing Offices :
7 JOHN STREET, LONDON, W.C.1.
Telephone : HOLBORN 6656

¶ The Editor of *The Labour Monthly* invites contributions. He cannot, however, be held responsible for MSS. sent to him or undertake to enter into correspondence regarding rejected contributions, although every endeavour will be made to return the same when a stamped and addressed envelope for that purpose is enclosed.

1936 : *Subscription Rates*
[PAID IN ADVANCE]

British Isles :

One year - 7/- Six months - 3/6

Abroad :

One year 8/- or $2.00 Six months 4/- or $1.00

American Subscription Representative :—Philip Novick, 270 Broadway, Suite 1401, New York City, U.S.A.

South African Representative :—I. Wolfson, P.O. Box 5457, Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa.

The Labour Monthly is also obtainable wholesale from The Workers' Bookshop, 38 Clerkenwell Green, E.C.1.

Advertisement Rates : £8 8s. od. per cover page and pro rata. £5 5s. od. per page (ordinary position) and pro rata (⅛th page minimum).

BOUND VOLUMES

Volume I	£5 5s. od.	*Volume X*	£1 10s. od.
Volume II	£3 3s. od.	*Volume XI*	£1 1s. od.
Volume III	£3 3s. od.	*Volume XII*	15s. 6d.
Volume IV	£3 3s. od.	*Volume XIII*	10s. 6d.
Volume V	£3 3s. od.	*Volume XIV*	10s. 6d.
Volume VI	£2 2s. od.	*Volume XV*	10s. 6d.
Volume VII	£2 2s. od.	*Volume XVI*	10s. 6d.
Volume VIII	£2 2s. od.	*Volume XVII*	10s. 6d.
Volume IX	£1 10s. od.		

Loose copies of last five volumes can be exchanged for a bound volume for 4s. 6d. Single loose copies are available of almost every issue except for 1921.

The articles in *The Labour Monthly* are indexed in the International Index to Periodicals, New York City, U.S.A., as well as in the annual index in each December issue.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTES OF THE MONTH

After Edinburgh—A Parallel—A Sector of a World Battle—National Government's Trap for Labour Movement—Experience of 1935—"Orders from Downing Street"—Plymouth as Preparation—Hoare's Call—Edinburgh's Bankruptcy—Technique of Confusion—Basic Reactionary Policy—Conservative Plaudits—Rising Forces—One Quarter in Opposition—Strength of Potential Opposition—The Central Contradiction of Edinburgh—Where the Opposition Failed—The Practical Lesson of Edinburgh.

ALL the forces of capitalism are overjoyed at the results of the Edinburgh Labour Party Conference. For proof of this it is only necessary to study the congratulatory references of Churchill, of Sir Thomas Inskip or the Conservative press. They see in the decisions of Edinburgh, alike on Spain, on arms, or on unity, a step to the closer subordination of the Labour Movement to the National Government, a step to the destruction of the Labour Party as an effective opposition force, and a check to the rising wave of working-class unity. On the other hand, within the Labour Movement the decisions of Edinburgh have given rise to widespread feelings of dismay and alarm ; a small section has succumbed to defeatist moods of pessimism and the advocacy of breakaways ; a larger body, sensing the menace of the present course, yet feeling the weakness of the existing opposition as revealed at Edinburgh, is filled with anxiety and uncertainty as to the whole future and what must be done. Yet in fact the situation revealed by Edinburgh is not a simple one, and cannot be summed up in any single diagnosis of pessimism or optimism. For in reality Edinburgh took place in the midst of a rising wave of working-class unity and struggle, demonstrated in South Wales where unity of all sections already rules in practice and was winning its first victories at Bedwas, demonstrated in the support of the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Unemployed March, despite bans, by official Labour organisations in leading centres all over the country, demonstrated in the support of fifteen hundred working-class organisations for Communist affiliation to the Labour Party and in the continuous one-quarter opposition vote at Edinburgh, and demonstrated on the very eve of the Conference by the victory of the London workers against Fascism. *The rising offensive of reaction which, in open conjunction with the National Government and capitalism, dealt its blows at Edinburgh, accompanies and corresponds to the rising wave of united working-class struggle.* Both are parts of a single process of sharpening battle.

THE situation is in certain respects comparable to that of the Liverpool Labour Party Conference eleven years ago. Then also a rising wave of working-class unity and struggle, which had revealed itself in Red Friday, was sweeping forward to the General Strike. Then also reaction struck its blow in the shape of the Liverpool decisions, including the exclusion of the Communists, sponsored by MacDonald and acclaimed by the plaudits of the entire capitalist press as a crushing check to the advance of working-class unity and militancy. But in fact the wave of united working-class struggle swept forward, unchecked by the paper resolutions of Liverpool, on to the General Strike ; and only then sank back, when the real struggle had proved that the forces of the working class were not yet ripe and prepared to face the conditions of decisive battle with capitalism. To-day, Edinburgh is reproducing a similar situation on a higher plane, and on the eve of a much greater struggle far exceeding the General Strike. And it is therefore more than ever necessary for all elements of the Labour Movement to take counsel together to-day, in order to check the disastrous consequences of the Edinburgh decisions, to rally the forces and prepare for the coming struggle whose opening stages are already here.

EDINBURGH can only be judged against the background of the larger issues that overshadowed its proceedings. For the Edinburgh Conference was in reality a central

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

battleground of the world struggle developing between the international working-class forces and Fascism ; and it was symptomatic of this real character that the three issues which dominated the Conference—Spain, arms and unity—were all direct expressions of this central issue, while the fourth leading question, that of the youth, was closely related to it. It is evident to all that the fascist offensive, the supreme offensive of dying capitalism, governs the world situation to-day. It is equally evident that behind the fascist offensive, as the decisive force making its advance possible, stands the National Government in Britain, which supports reaction, sabotages a collective front for peace, arms and protects Nazi Germany, manœuvres against the Franco-Soviet Pact and was the true initiator (not in form, but in practice) and compelling power of the policy of strangling Spanish Democracy in the name of " neutrality." *But behind the question of the British National Government stands the question of the British Labour Movement.*

THE National Government can only perform its world reactionary rôle so long as it can count on the effective paralysis of opposition from the working class in Britain. More : as it advances closer into the war zone, it requires the positive support and collaboration of the Labour Movement. This is the key to the inner tactical policy of the National Government, which is directed to winning the co-operation of the upper stratum of the trade union and Labour organisations against the tendencies of working-class opposition. And this is the key to the underlying issues of Edinburgh. Behind all the issues of Edinburgh lay the question of the relation of the Labour Movement to the National Government : whether the Labour Movement shall retreat into co-operation with the National Government in the gathering war situation, or whether it shall organise and lead a united working class and popular front of opposition to defeat the National Government. On the outcome of this fight depends the immediate future in Europe, and therewith the issue of war or peace.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A FIRST approach to such co-operation had been made already in the autumn of 1935 over the Italian war on Abyssinia. In place of combining the fight for effective measures of collective resistance to the Italian fascist aggression with directly attacking and exposing the rôle of the National Government as the enemy of any real collective front, the Labour Party fell into the position of endorsing the claim of the National Government as the champion of collective peace against fascist aggression. The disastrous consequences of this collaboration, with the resulting paralysis of the opposition to the National Government, immediately made themselves felt in the General Election victory of the National Government, followed by the betrayal of Abyssinia, the triumph of Italian Fascism, the intensification of the Nazi offensive and the extension of the fascist offensive to Spain. To-day, it is universally recognised by every section and leader of the Labour Movement that that experiment in collaboration in 1935 was a disaster. It was referred to with bitterness and disillusionment in the Chairman's Address at Edinburgh. The leader of the Labour Party at the Edinburgh demonstration on October 7 declared (*Daily Herald* report):

> The Labour Movement last year declared its readiness to support the action taken by the League of Nations in opposing Italian aggression. That was the opportunity of rallying the whole country to the support of the Government.
>
> The Government used our declaration in order to win the General Election. Then they betrayed us.

Yet in the face of this experience the dominant leadership of the Labour Movement is in fact preparing to move to even closer collaboration with the National Government, which will lead to still more disastrous consequences, over rearmament. This was the real issue underlying Edinburgh.

IN order to judge Edinburgh correctly, it is essential to see, not only the situation in the Labour Movement, but the moves of the enemy camp and on the side of the National Government. Never before any Labour Party Conference was there such a direct lead given from all the capitalist forces

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and their Government. In hard fact " Orders from Downing Street " replaced the mythical " Orders from Moscow " ; and the climax of humiliation was reached when for two days the decision of the Conference was held up in order that the leaders, confronted with a difficult and unexpected situation of revolt, might journey to London to consult Neville Chamberlain. The hand of the master showed clumsily behind the trappings. The entire campaign of the capitalist press and of the National Government was openly directed to defeat working-class unity and to draw the Labour Movement into co-operation with the Government.

ALREADY the Plymouth Trades Union Congress was judged to have prepared the ground, by its unity with the Government's policy of strangling the Spanish popular struggle, by its vendetta against Communism, and by the emphatic hints of Bevin that cherished beliefs might have to be revised. The organs of Conservatism applauded these " wise " decisions and declarations, and speedily proceeded to demand a more definite delivery of the goods. The *Times* declared in an editorial on September 12 :

> Recent discussion, and not least the discussion in the Trades Union Congress, has shown a remarkable amount of agreement among men of widely different schools of thought on the immediate and practical direction of British policy in Europe. . . . . But something more is needed than a working agreement on actual measures of defence.

Ten days later it returned to the charge in an editorial on September 22 :

> There can be no question of a bargain between the Government and the Opposition. Both will follow their own policies directed by their convictions. But convictions are not weakened because at a given point they sanction common action.

The liberal *News Chronicle* reported its impression on September 17 :

> The united front is here at last, but it is a united front of the Government and the Opposition.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SUCH was the situation as reached by Plymouth. Emboldened by Plymouth, the National Government now came into the open with its orders for Edinburgh. At the Margate Conservative Conference immediately preceding Edinburgh, Sir Samuel Hoare for the Government cracked the whip :

> The wise attitude adopted by the Trades Union Congress over the Spanish crisis shows that in the ranks of Labour there is a solid force of patriotic responsibility.
>
> Responsible leaders of Labour can give invaluable help. They came forward with their assistance in the war. Let all who believe in liberty and ordered progress join with the Government in bringing the rearmament programme to a swift and successful fulfilment.

This too open cracking of the whip, with its direct reference to the War Coalition, naturally aroused indignant repudiation from the Labour Party leadership as "impertinent" and "presumptuous." But the proceedings of Edinburgh were to show that the objection was rather to the too open flaunting of their servility than to the policy which made them servile.

DID Edinburgh fall into the National Government's trap? There is much talk of the "confusion," the "unclearness," the "ambiguity" of Edinburgh's decisions, of resolutions that decided nothing and papered over divisions with empty formulas, of the spectacle of a leadership at cross-purposes within itself and unable to reach a definite policy. Undoubtedly there is a measure of truth in this picture. Never before Edinburgh has such a cruel and deadly demonstration been presented of the bankruptcy of Social Democracy to give leadership to the workers in the hour of crisis. It was not only the left who criticised ; all alike, right, left or centre, felt this bankruptcy. It was a delegate of the right who, in opposing the united front, declared :

> No one could leave the Edinburgh Conference with any feeling of hope about the future of the Labour Movement. He was profoundly disturbed about the way the movement was being run.

It was again a delegate of the right who, in supporting the Government's rearmament programme, presented a merciless parallel, which deeply impressed the Conference, between the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

situation of the Labour Party and that of German Social Democracy before Hitler. Edinburgh presented the spectacle of a party adrift, of a party that had lost faith in itself, of a party and a leadership in disintegration. *Just this disintegration, just this confusion of leadership—the inevitable consequence of the refusal of the path of working class unity and united struggle—is the deepest menace of Edinburgh to the Labour Movement, and opens the road to Fascism.*

BUT let there be no illusions. There is no vacuum in politics. If the path of united working-class struggle is refused, then the other path, the path of capitulation, of least resistance, of slipping into co-operation with the National Government, inevitably conquers. Behind all the confusion the dominant sections of the trade union and Labour leadership were pursuing a definite policy, and it was that policy which was actually embodied in the official decisions. The "ambiguity" and "unclearness" was only the cover of the real reactionary policy, because in no other form could such a reactionary policy be carried through a Labour Conference. *But just this "ambiguity" and "unclearness" is the classic form of reactionary policy in the Labour Movement, the classic technique of MacDonaldism*—to hide betrayal behind a cloud of phrases which leave honest delegates floundering impotently in a fog, while the real policy is put through behind the scenes. Certainly such confusion is a tribute to the instinctive opposition of the mass of the delegates. But if the opposition fails to cut through the confusion and enforce clearness, then it has failed. The official resolutions, which underneath the formulas of confusion in fact prepare the way for co-operation with the National Government, were carried, as they were intended to be carried. The interpretation rests with the National Council, on which the dominant reactionary sections hold the scales. And there is no question of the direction in which these ruling sections intend to interpret them.

THE arms resolution, the loud flourish with which it was promulgated just before the Conference, the declaration of the official Labour organ that it represented "defi-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nitely a new orientation of policy," the devotion of a day's debate to it as the main debate of the Conference—all this had no meaning if it were only a " re-affirmation " of old policy. The manœuvres of a section of the leadership, not to oppose the resolution, but to explain it away as meaning nothing, so far from assisting the opposition, disorganised it and assisted the resolution to be carried. Morrison might appear to win a tactical victory and disconcert Bevin by subjecting the resolution to lawyer-like interpretations concerning the significance of " competitive rearmament " in order to prove that the resolution implied opposition to the Government's arms programme, and even so leave a loophole by handing over the decisive issue to the Parliamentary Labour Party as a question of " parliamentary tactics " outside the scope of the Conference to determine. The only effect of the manœuvre, which concealed the real issue from the Conference, was to assist the resolution to be carried. With the resolution once carried, the way is open for the dominant driving forces on the National Council, which are openly steering to co-operation with the National Government, to sweep aside lawyer-like interpretations and press forward their policy. And this is precisely what they are doing, as the statement of Marchbank in the *Railway Review* after the Conference makes clear :

> Later speeches from Parliamentary leaders left it more than doubtful whether they accepted the resolution as a mandate for ceasing to oppose the Government's rearmament programme.
>
> That is the practical question at issue.
>
> Mr. Herbert Morrison, and I think, also Mr. Attlee, seemed to claim that the Parliamentary Labour Party would still be free to vote against rearmament.
>
> It will be the duty of the National Council of Labour to clear this matter up.

DID Edinburgh fall into the National Government's trap ? On this issue the open rejoicings and congratulations of the National Government's own spokesmen and of the organs of Conservatism are more revealing evidence than the casuistical protestations of that section of the Labour leadership which will neither face the necessity of united struggle

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nor the realities of the reactionary policy that is the only alternative. Listen to the Government's own Minister of Defence :

> There is widespread satisfaction at the official Labour Opposition's new declaration towards rearmament. (Sir Thomas Inskip, speaking at Watford on October 14.)

Similarly the open pro-fascist *Observer* (October 11, 1936) :

> That official Labour has returned to sanity on the subject of national defence is an event of the first importance.

The unofficial leader of Conservatism, Winston Churchill, pours out his praise on the decisions of Edinburgh :

> He had been very glad to see the robust and sensible attitude adopted by our great trade unions. They had taken three very important decisions, all helpful to the strength and safety of our country. First, they had repudiated any idea of making what was called a " Popular Front " by fusion with the Communists. Secondly, they had declared against mixing ourselves up in this ferocious Spanish civil war. Thirdly, they had made it plain that they did not intend to be at the mercy of Continental dictators, and that therefore British trade unionism would support the necessary building-up of our defences.

And he proceeded to draw the practical moral :

> He would like to see men of all parties taken into the confidence of the Government, and especially the responsible leaders of trade unionism, who had shown that they realised our danger, and whose aid in producing munitions was invaluable. (Winston Churchill, speaking at Woodford on October 14.)

Finally, the fascist-chauvinist *Daily Mail* (which Morrison had singled out as the only journal accurately reporting Labour's view) exactly expressed the practical significance, from the standpoint of the fascist-chauvinist circles it represents, of the Edinburgh resolution in relation to the confusion amid which it was passed :

> Everybody has watched a flock of sheep driven through a five-barred gate—how they blunder and jostle, butt each other's ribs, shy from the entry at the last minute and then make a sudden clumsy bolt to get safely in.
>
> The process reminds one of what happened yesterday at the Socialist Conference at Edinburgh. After baulking and prancing and hoofing each other and giving vent to loud baas that sounded like " collective security," the delegates—thanks to hot and trying

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

work by Dr. Dalton and other flockmasters—have been *marshalled into the rearmament fold.* (*Daily Mail*, October 7.)

NOTHING is to be gained by concealing from view or refusing to face the full reactionary character and extreme menace represented by the Edinburgh decisions. The naïve consolation that "nobody knows what the resolutions really mean" only disorganises the opposition and protects the real reactionary policy. On the contrary, the beginning of wisdom and salvation consists in frankly facing, emphasising and awakening the whole movement to the extreme menace represented by these decisions. On every issue the Edinburgh decisions represent the surrender and enslavement of the Labour Movement to the National Government and the fascist offensive. On Spain even the second resolution, after the overwhelming feeling of the delegates for ending the "neutrality" blockade, did not declare for its ending, but still clung to the skirts of the Government and its "investigations." On rearmament the resolution prepares the way for co-operation with the National Government, to which the most powerful sections of the trade union bureaucracy are moving, with consequences which will threaten every working-class right, every trade union standard, and the whole existence of free working-class organisation, at the same time as shattering and paralysing the opposition in the country to the National Government. On unity the continued sectarian, doctrinaire refusal of any common front is equivalent to a blank cheque to the National Government to continue in power, as well as an open invitation to the extension of the fascist attack on democracy which has immediately followed Edinburgh. On the question of the youth the decisions typically strike down, disrupt and smash a growing movement, precisely because it shows signs of life, at the very moment when the question of the youth is a most urgent political question for the fight against Fascism and the effect of the decisions is to seek to make a present of the youth to the inroads of Fascism. Such is the tragic balance sheet of the Edinburgh decisions.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BUT once the reactionary character of the Edinburgh decisions has been frankly faced, and the necessity of fighting them by every means in order to save the working-class movement from grave peril clearly seen, then it can also be recognised that the possibilities of successfully fighting them exist, that the paper decisions of Edinburgh do not correctly express the present relation of forces in the working-class movement, and that the rising drive towards unity, which is more and more dominating the situation of the Labour Movement in all the big centres throughout the country, and is going forward and will go forward, in spite of Edinburgh, compelled also its partial reflection in the proceedings of Edinburgh. Never before was there such a continuous opposition between the mass of the delegates and the platform. The continuous opposition of over one quarter of the Conference—a varying quarter in composition, but, taking into account the ironing out of minorities both in the local labour parties and in nearly all trade union delegations, roughly representative of the organised strength reached—not merely on one or another issue, but on every leading political issue against the official line, is a new phenomenon in the Labour Party.

THE *Daily Herald* editorial of October 8 might endeavour to talk of the 592,000 vote for Communist affiliation as "a numerical and moral rout":

> Failure was always certain. But yesterday was more than failure. It was a numerical and moral rout. The majority in the Edinburgh Conference was overwhelming. (*Daily Herald*, October 8, 1936.)

But the writer of this editorial of smug complacency over disunity had forgotten that only two days previously his fellow-writer of the editorial of the same *Daily Herald* on October 6 had proclaimed the smaller minority of 519,000 on the Spanish issue to be so impressive as to prove that the resolution had only been adopted "with misgiving and with a heavy mind."

> Yesterday's vote at Edinburgh on "non-intervention" is a faithful reflection of the mind of the Labour Movement. The recommendation of the executive is approved. But the size of the minority is evidence that approval is given with misgiving and with a heavy mind. (*Daily Herald*, October 6, 1936.)

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

If 519,000 is so heavy a minority as to prove in the view of the official Labour organ that the Executive policy is only carried "with misgiving and with a heavy mind," what is the significance of a minority of 592,000? But in fact the 592,000, while including the miners' block vote, from which the minority should be deducted to reach a correct measure, did not include the heavy minorities for affiliation in other important trade unions, as well as in the local labour parties, including majorities in many local labour parties which were not able to send a delegate.

IN fact the one-quarter opposition vote did not by any means reflect the full potential strength of the opposition, not only within the Labour Movement, but also within the Conference. The very fact that the official line had to take refuge behind a fog of evasions, confusions and double meanings was a tribute to the instinctive opposition feelings of the majority of the delegates. The entire body of delegates passionately wished to support the struggle in Spain; they would have undoubtedly, especially after the Spanish envoys' speeches, carried with acclamation a resolution to end the support of the "neutrality" blockade. That issue was to the last held back from being clearly put. Similarly the whole course of the debate on arms, the very fact that every official speaker had to preface his remarks with a solemn protestation of undying opposition to the Government's arms programme, sufficiently showed that if the wish of the delegates had been expressed in the resolution, they would have undoubtedly passed a resolution of irreconcilable opposition to the Government's arms programme. But that issue was never clearly put. The whole Conference rose again and again in applause at every reference to the victory of the united London workers over Fascism. The resolution carried only found the incident "deplorable."

HOW was this contradiction possible? How were these most reactionary decisions of any Conference carried at a time when the whole temper of the Labour movement is rising and advancing towards united struggle, and

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that rising wave found its powerful reflection in the mood of the delegates at Edinburgh? The suggestion is put forward in some quarters to blame the block vote as the decisive cause. Such explanations do not yet get close enough to the real issues. A very little more, had the issues been clearly put, had the fight been more effectively waged with all opposition forces both before and at the Conference, would have turned the scale in a number of delegations, and the block vote would have begun to work the other way. The root question is political, and not merely a question of constitutions. It is a question of the political leadership of the opposition.

THE most important lesson of Edinburgh was not the much-advertised "confusion" and "unclearness" of the official leadership. *The most important lesson of Edinburgh was the confusion and unclearness of the opposition leadership, their failure to force the issues to clearness, and their failure to stand forward as an alternative political leadership with a clear political line and programme on all issues, straightly fighting the official line, and capable of rallying the majority of the delegates.* The dominant official leadership, represented by Bevin-Citrine-Dalton, is not at all "unclear." It knows what it wants, and is driving straight for it. The "unclearness" is only the reflection of the necessity for driving through an unpopular policy. But the opposition elements, as represented in the medley of individual protests and incursions on particular issues, from particular leading figures, without any common fight or drive, do not yet exist as a political force knowing what they want, and therefore cannot get it. The sentiment, the strong feeling towards a different line from the official reactionary line, towards united struggle against Fascism and against the National Government, was visibly present in the mass of the delegates. *But it was never led.* In consequence, the only approach to a coherent positive leadership within the Conference carried the day, even if behind a mantle of confusion to hide the really unrepresentative and unpopular character of the policy.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THIS is the most important practical lesson of Edinburgh for the immediate future. If the extreme menace represented by the reactionary decisions of Edinburgh is to be defeated, if the working-class movement is to be rallied from the tendencies of disintegration and impotence resulting from these decisions, if a powerful front is to be built up, capable of defeating the national Government and the offensive of fascist war, then it is essential that now at this critical moment after Edinburgh, when the movement has still the choice between two paths (the path of German Social Democracy or the path of the French People's Front), when the shock of Edinburgh has awakened wide sections far beyond the old left elements to the peril of the position and the necessity that something must be done, at this moment of crisis and opportunity all serious elements in the Labour movement, all without exception from top to bottom, should draw together in unity in the immediate struggle, should hammer out a common programme and fight on it as a single army, should raise the banner of unity more openly than ever before to the whole working-class movement and mobilise the workers to unity in action which will sweep past all the decisions of reaction and disruption. It can be done. The tide of working-class unity in action is advancing in London, in South Wales, all over the country, in response to the imperious demands of the struggle for the workers' needs, against Fascism, and against reaction and the National Government. The demand for the common front of all the popular democratic forces against the National Government spreads on all sides. The pressure of this situation is already telling on sections of the Labour Party leadership and producing the first tendencies of differentiation. Now is the moment when this advance must be carried forward with a redoubled offensive that will sweep past every barrier of disruption and reaction, and force the issue of unity to victory. This situation throws a heavy responsibility on every element in the Labour movement capable of giving leadership and assisting in the common struggle.

R. P. D.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE AT EDINBURGH

By HAROLD J. LASKI

I.

TO see the Labour Party's Conference at Edinburgh in proper perspective it is essential to remember the circumstances in which it was held. It was the first Conference since the last General Election, in which the progress of the party towards power was definitely disappointing. It was the first Conference, also, since the party had learned, from the Hoare-Laval conversations, what comes of an even conditional support for the National Government. It met after Nuremberg had shown decisively the will to war that is the foundation of Hitler's policy. It met while the Fascist rebels in Spain, openly helped by Hitler and Mussolini, were multiplying successes against the Spanish workers whom a policy of non-intervention, mainly due to Great Britain, had deprived of the arms to which they had a legal right. It met with the knowledge that the relentless pressure of Japanese imperialism on China had entered upon a new phase of insolent attack. It met, also, when the future of the League of Nations was obviously dark even to the most ardent of its supporters.

Domestically, the situation was grim. Nothing had been done for the distressed areas. The tragedies of the Means Test were to be continued by the new Regulations. The greatest living authority on unemployment statistics—Sir William Beveridge—had just warned the country that a new depression was approaching. An Education Act had just been placed on the statute-book which every authority in the country had combined to denounce as evasive trickery. The armaments programme had meant a boom on the Stock Exchange ; but all over Great Britain, while wealth accumulated, men were decaying. No one who looked at the figures of the by-elections was entitled to the belief that the Labour Party was advancing. And anyone who scrutinised the attitude of the governing classes to Fascism at home and abroad could hardly avoid the realisation that in a choice between the maintenance of privilege and the maintenance of constitutional democracy, the governing classes threw all their sympathy on the side of the former.

Such an atmosphere called for certain obvious things. (1) A clear lead was required. It was vital not merely for this country, but for

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the whole world, to know where the Labour Party stood on the vital issues of the day. (2) The maximum unity in the working-class movement was essential. At this time, of all times, it was imperative that the main need—a movement so united that it could take the offensive—was essential. (3) Realism was required. The mind of the Conference should be directed not to the possible result of a general election three or four years from now, but to the immediate shadow of war and fascism which now bestrides the world like a colossus. We needed the kind of conference that would have sent every delegate home convinced that these three requirements had been fulfilled. We needed the kind of conference that would have convinced the British people that they cannot have a socialist government too soon if the menace of war and fascism is to be overcome.

II.

No one can say that this has resulted from the Edinburgh Conference. The debate on rearmament shows that there is no clear lead in the Labour Party's outlook. The resolution produced for the delegates was a muddled compromise. It meant one thing to Mr. Dalton who moved it in a speech which seemed to imply full support for the government's programme combined with contempt for its members. Mr. Morrison interpreted the resolution quite differently. Mr. Bevin protested against Mr. Morrison's interpretation. Mr. Lansbury and Lord Arnold pleaded for absolute pacifism ; the latter seemed to speak as though Lord Beaverbrook was the one sane guide on international policy in a mad world. Lord Strabolgi explained that the National Government must be allowed to re-arm now in case a subsequent Labour Government needed arms if and when it was in office ; what this government would do with the arms before that time he did not think fit to enquire. No one, at the end, knew what the resolution meant. In a speech intended to bring clarity from confusion, Mr. Attlee seemed to conclude that its meaning would later be decided by the Parliamentary party when the House of Commons meets.

The position on Spain was less muddled in result, though it showed weakness and hesitation. On Monday, despite bitter protests from the delegates, the block votes of the trade unions secured a big majority for non-intervention. On Wednesday, the delegates heard what non-intervention in fact meant from two Spanish comrades. Mr. Attlee and Mr. Greenwood were then dispatched to London to consult with Mr. Chamberlain. As a result, the Conference agreed on Friday that if the non-intervention agreement was found to be either ineffective or violated, the Spanish Government should be given back its right to purchase arms. It should be said that all the evidence which produced the new

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

decision on Friday was available to the Conference when it took its first decision. It is further clear that the investigation of alleged non-intervention may be blocked by Germany and Italy. By the time it is either complete, or new controls to make it effective have been applied, it may well be too late. And, in any case, all the initial advantages of the non-intervention agreement are left to the rebels. The civil war is to be prolonged because the Labour Party took at its face value the National Government's fear of a European war emerging from the Spanish War. Their hesitations of last August have had the same effect in aiding Fascism as their desire to believe in the bona-fides of Sir Samuel Hoare's speech of September 11th, 1935. What is clear in the Spanish situation is that any co-operation of Labour with the National Government will simply be used to the detriment of the Spanish workers.

Three-quarters of the Conference voted against the admission of the Communist Party to the ranks of Labour. The debate was farcical, and not even honestly so. It was deliberately closured by the executive, after some half dozen speeches, by the pretext that the Spanish delegates must be heard. Obviously, they could have been heard before the debate ; obviously, also, they could have been heard later in the afternoon. The platform deliberately exploited their presence in order to prevent any real discussion of the issue. The arguments used for exclusion were pitiful. They were :—(i) that Communists are hypocritical in applying for affiliation ; (ii) that they are too unimportant to risk alienating other parts of the electorate ; (iii) that if admitted, they will swamp the party conferences ; (iv) that they believe in dictatorship and not in democracy as the Labour Party does ; (v) they are dominated by Moscow.

A word on each of these arguments is desirable. On the first, Mr. Lawther reported the experience of the Miners' Federation in an exactly opposite sense ; and many other organisations would speak (as they have resolved) in the same way. In any case, the proof of Communist sincerity depends upon an attempt to work with them. The refusal to make the attempt is, in my judgment, to perpetuate divisions in the movement of which Mussolini and Hitler are the logical outcome. The second and third arguments cancel each other out ; if the Communist Party is so unimportant, how can it dominate the party ? The fourth argument is a mere blind. The question is deliberately framed so as to mislead. No communist, to my knowledge, believes in dictatorship for its own sake. He argues that the capitalist class will overthrow democracy rather than accept socialism, and that a proletarian dictatorship will prove the necessary vehicle of capitalist defeat on all the available evidence. Looking at Italy, Germany, Spain, Poland, Hungary and S.E. Europe, he seems to me to have solid ground for his view. Is the Labour Party's answer more than the affirmation that British capitalists will,

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

because of our character and traditions, act differently from capitalists abroad? Is that a good answer in the light of the available evidence?

The fifth objection seems to me more solidly grounded. I think the Communist Party's affiliation to the Third International is a definite stumbling-block unless the party agrees that, after admission to the Labour Party, it will accept the latter's decisions in preference to any made at Moscow. But I should myself hope that this situation would make an end of the present divisions of the international working-class and lead to the creation of that world united front that is now an urgent matter. There is blame on both sides for these divisions. The admission of the Communists to the Labour Party would be a long step to their removal.

Closely related to the refusal to admit the Communists was the decision to reorganise the League of Youth. This was done to remove from the latter body certain members who, seemingly, were dissatisfied with executive policy, and dared to criticise it emphatically. This was represented as disloyalty, and the officials will, accordingly, be able to produce a tame League responsive only to what the executive seems fit to endorse. I confess that this decision seems to me a disastrous one for three reasons. (i) it is always evil to meet criticism by decapitation ; (ii) it will discourage the younger people in the Labour movement from feeling that they have an organ of free expression ; (iii) it hides from the executive the depth of the dissatisfaction their policy encounters. Thereby, clearly, it makes for complacency of a wholly unsatisfactory kind.

There is one other debate to which reference must be made—that on the distressed areas. Three resolutions directed attention to their special problems, and grim pictures were drawn of their citizens. The growth of malnutrition, the increase in maternal morbidity and tuberculosis were emphasised. But there was no response to the one concrete suggestion made—that the party should put all its weight behind the marchers from Jarrow. The proposals made by the executive have no meaning for the National Government unless the burden of suffering with which they are intended to deal are relentlessly driven home to its members. London and the South are relatively prosperous ; Wales, Lancashire and the North-East are far away. What moves the Government is not investigation—we have had that almost to the point of nauseation—but such a depth of public feeling that they become convinced that defeat is the consequence of inaction. I cannot discover in the Conference resolutions one principle, one method, which will cause this government a moment's discomfort. More Reports—they are forgotten the day after publication by those who are comfortable. More debates in the House of Commons? But the application of the Government's mechanical majority ends their effect. Only profound national agitation can be effective in Whitehall ; and I confess that, as I read the debate in Edinburgh, I could not but feel that this was an act the Labour Party had lost.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

III.

The leadership at Edinburgh was fumbling and incompetent. There was no sense of direction. There was no clarity of purpose. There was no message to the country which would convey a sense that a change in the Constitution of the Government would alter the perspective of affairs. Over it all there reigned a timidity grimly like that which proved the downfall of the two Labour Governments. There was, above all, a lack of realism before the great events that confront us.

For, surely, the experience of the post-war years have made certain propositions unmistakably clear. They are :—

1. Capitalism and democracy are no longer compatible with each other. They are engaged in a death-struggle. And the main factor in the defeat of democracy is a divided working-class. Where this exists, capitalism is always in a position to take the offensive. Where it does so, it is able to establish a dictatorship which can only be overthrown by revolutionary means.

What is the answer of the leaders of the Labour Party to this view ? That we are not like the Germans ? But that was what the Germans said of Italian Fascism. That a Labour victory at the polls would be a safeguard against capitalist attack ? But, with the present temper of our leadership, what prospect of that victory is there at the next election ? And, even if we won, are not the constitutional problems involved so delicate and dangerous as to risk all the fruits of victory ? More : after Spain, is it not clear that no reliance can be placed upon a governing class to accept the consequences of its defeat ? Is there, in fact, any way to victory except a policy which, built upon a united Labour movement, meets the capitalist challenge with a full recognition of all that it may involve ?

The alternative is the acceptance of the theory of the " community-consciousness " upon which MacDonald acted when he was Labour Prime Minister. It is a theory which involves co-operation with, instead of a break from, capitalism. It means an emphasis upon social reform (where this is financially feasible) to the exclusion of any socialist measures which capitalism is unprepared to accept. And from it there emerges the certainty of another 1931.

2. The contradictions of capitalism mean imperialist war. This is plainly implicit in the policy of the Fascist powers. It is futile to think that we can keep out of such a war. The only way to prevent it is by alliance with those powers which have no interest in aggression and a warning to the Fascist powers that any attempt on their part to change frontiers by force will be met with force on our part in concert with our allies. A British pact with France and Soviet Russia, which would be open to other powers similarly prepared to resist aggression, justifies

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

re-armament against the menace of Fascism. No other policy can justify it ; for it is clear from the Sino-Japanese struggle and the Italo-Ethiopian conflict that the National Government is not prepared to take any action which may endanger the stability of the Fascist powers.

3. To maintain the doctrine of non-intervention in Spain is indefensible. It is being violated every day by Germany, Italy and Portugal. Its result is simply to reinforce the authority of Fascism by persuading them that they can intrigue for the overthrow of any constitutional government so long as they threaten war. The Labour Party ought to be clear that our own fate, as well as that of France, is being decided on the battlefield of Spain. The victory of General Franco will bring a world-war a long step nearer. His defeat will renew the prestige of constitutional government all over the world. The only way to his defeat is by allowing the Spanish government its right in international law to purchase arms. The denial of that right means surrender to the most dangerous manœuvre the Fascist powers have yet invented. For it is to allow them to finance and organise civil war in order to extend their empire over Western civilisation and so make their task easier in the event of a general conflagration.

This, let me add, is the only policy of collective security which has now any meaning. It is in full accord with the principles of the League. It recognises—what is the fact—that the principles of the League have now no meaning for the Fascist powers. It emphasises that aggression on their part will not take place against an isolated opponent but against the fullest equipped alliance that can be arrayed against them. Once they understand this, they will hesitate ; and once they hesitate, the initiative in international policy will pass to the powers which have no interest in aggression. That will be the beginning of the end of Fascism. It is, therefore, the duty of the Labour Party deliberately to inform the country that since Fascism and peace are no longer compatible ideas, these are the principles upon which it is prepared to defend peace. And it is its duty to make it plain to the National Government, that on any other principles, its rearmament programme will meet with unrelenting opposition from the forces of Labour.

IV.

For anyone who realises how vital is the time-factor in the present conjuncture of affairs, Edinburgh is inevitably a disheartening experience. But the lesson from it is the need to re-double our efforts for unity, and not to slacken them. There is plenty of evidence to show that the decisions there are far from representing either the ideas or the mood of the rank and file. There is important evidence that the younger members of the party profoundly dislike the lack of realism its leaders display. There

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are clear signs that many constituency parties recognise (as Mr. Herbert Morrison recognised before his election to the National Executive) that the present constitution of the party makes it difficult, if not impossible, for mass-opinion to be effectively expressed in conference votes. The majorities produced by the platform are mechanical majorities unrelated to the real distribution of opinion among those who do the work of the party.

We must use the next twelve months to re-shape the Labour Party into a fighting instrument of the working-class movement. If we fail to do so, the defeat of the movement is certain. But to re-shape the movement into a fighting movement means the conscious adoption by it of a social philosophy which recognises the nature of the battle in which we are engaged. Until the movement has such a philosophy it can adopt neither the strategy nor the tactics required by the situation. Its present drift arises precisely because such a social philosophy is absent. The leaders of the Labour Party think of themselves as an Opposition which can inherit the mantle of office from the government in precisely the same way as the Conservatives used to inherit from the Liberals. They forget that the classic form of representative government only worked in this country because Conservatives and Liberals alike accepted the private ownership of the means of production as the postulate upon which all their fundamental policies were built. The Labour Party rejects that postulate. Its accession to power would, therefore, raise problems for those who believe in capitalism different in kind from those to which we have been so far accustomed in the years since 1689. Either the Labour Party must adapt its technique to the faith it is supposed to hold, or it must reveal itself for what it otherwise is—a revised form of the Liberal Party which wants larger social reforms in the periods of upward trends in the trade-cycle. If it decides to be the latter, it is then clear that socialists have no place in its membership. For socialism is a method of action as well as an ultimate goal ; and its method of action is built upon the recognition that it is the historic mission of the working-class to capture the state and so end the private ownership of the means of production. The whole technique of socialism as a living philosophy flows from that pivotal insight. The lesson of Edinburgh is, I suggest, either that we must convert the Labour Party to its acceptance, or, through new instruments, find the way to that goal which is now alone capable of giving mankind that peace and plenty which science has made the rightful heritage of our generation.

THE OCTOBER ISSUE—Sold Out!
See page 682

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LABOUR AND REARMAMENT

By J. R. CAMPBELL

THE debate on the Labour Party attitude to rearmament was by common consent one of the most important in the whole history of that Party. The Executive Committee allotted an entire day to the debate and the principal Labour leaders gave their views at great length.

The resolution which was passed was a compromise resolution, open to the most diverse interpretations. The importance of the arms debate is to be judged not by the resolution which was accepted, but by the clear light which it threw upon the tendencies in the Labour Movement, particularly the dominant right wing tendency.

The resolution was in itself an attempt to reply to the question : " what is to be the policy of the Labour Movement in reply to the diplomatic and military offensive of the fascist Powers ? " ; " what is the reply of the Labour Movement to the charge that, while pressing the Government to take a stronger attitude to the fascist Powers, it is refusing to vote for the armaments which are necessary in order to maintain this firmer attitude ? "

Margate, 1935—For a Negotiated Settlement

Right till the Trades Union Congress in September the Trade Union and Labour bureaucracy had pinned their hopes on the possibility of a general European settlement by negotiation. That was the line of the Trades Union Congress resolution at Margate in 1935, when it stated that :

> Congress reaffirms its policy, outlined in 1934 at Weymouth, and declares its resolute faith in a collective peace system operating within the League of Nations, and its determination to take all appropriate action to make that system a reality.
>
> Congress reiterates its demand for practical and adequate measures of disarmament, and for the establishment of an international agreement for the supervision of the manufacture, sale and transport of arms and munitions, and for the suppression of the private manufacture of arms. It calls upon the British Government to take the initiative, through the League of Nations, to convene a new Conference of all nations concerned, in order that this purpose may be achieved.
>
> Finally, the Congress instructs the General Council, in conjunction with the National Council of Labour, to watch closely the development of events in order that, should emergency arise, such measures may be

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

taken, in consultation with the affiliated organisations, as may be necessary to deal with the situation.

At the London Trades Council Conference on February 24, 1936, Citrine said :

> There were important differences between pacts of non-aggression—such as the Briand-Kellogg Pact—and the suggested pacts of mutual assistance, such as is now contemplated between France and Russia. Our policy rested not on a series of such pacts which are little more than pre-war alliances, but on the League.

When the Rhineland occupation took place, a very considerable section of the political Labour leadership took a pro-German line. The occupation of the Rhineland was of course formally condemned, but the main stress of the *Daily Herald*, which represented this section of the Labour Movement, was on " exploring " the genuineness of Hitler's so-called " peace offer." On March 16 the *Herald* said :

> We return to these considerations because it grows clearer that Hitler can most easily and most effectively dissolve the crisis he has created. He wants a great place in history for his country. He could place Germany in a position of moral leadership of the world by a few words.

These illusions as to Hitler's " peace " policy were shattered by (1) his refusal to answer the British questionnaire as to his intentions in Eastern Europe, (2) his continued postponement of the date when he would be prepared to meet the Locarno Powers, and (3) the Fascist offensive on Spain. On August 20 the National Council of Labour was forced to declare :

> The course of events has shown the Fascist Powers grow more reckless, aggressive and dangerous. That is a portent and a warning that the democratic nations cannot ignore.

At the Trades Union Congress Mr. Findlay followed this up by saying :

> If the Soviet Union, France and ourselves framed a pact of non-aggression and mutual assistance, based on the League Covenant, and open to all, it would in his judgment unquestionably preserve Peace both in Europe and in Asia.

Before Edinburgh, 1936—For a grouping of Peaceful Powers

The preamble of the Labour Party Conference resolution put the same idea in a less concrete form as follows :

> Further, it is urgently necessary to form in Europe, within the framework of the League, a strong group of peaceful nations, firmly pledged to non-aggression and to mutual assistance against any aggressor, and to a policy of full political and economic co-operation ; membership of such a group, once formed, to be open to all States which are willing to accept the obligations and to enjoy the benefit of membership.

Now having arrived at this point it was necessary for the Labour leadership to answer the questions : " what has been the attitude of the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

National Government towards the growing aggressiveness of the fascist Powers ? " ; " what is likely to be its attitude to any suggestions for an all European pact of mutual assistance within the League ? " The Labour leadership did not dare to face up to the implications of this policy. If it had, it would have been compelled to recognise that the foreign policy of the National Government was entirely hostile to any attempt to strengthen the League on the basis of the co-operation of the peaceful Powers. The Government had made the Naval Pact with Germany behind the back of the League ; it had restrained France when Hitler occupied the Rhineland ; it had repeatedly declared that it was against further commitments in Eastern Europe (and therefore would be against the proposed European Pact of Mutual Assistance) ; at the moment that the Labour Party Conference was meeting it was seeking to blow up the Franco-Soviet Pact ; it was public knowledge that it had brought pressure to bear on the Blum Government not to aid the legal Spanish Government at Madrid.

Escaping the Implications at Edinburgh

It is perfectly obvious that if the policy outlined by Mr. Findlay at the T.U.C. and in the preamble to the resolution at the Labour Party Conference was to be put into operation, it could only be in consequence of a strong fight against the National Government. But the Labour leadership had no perspective of a struggle against the National Government. Mr. Bevin delivered a speech at the T.U.C. which envisaged that Government lasting for another four years. All suggestion of the development of a united front for struggle against this Government had been rejected by the Labour leadership, and at the Trades Union Congress a resolution calling for a peace campaign of all organisations standing for collective security was rejected because it was alleged to be " an attempt to smuggle the United Front in by the back door."

The Labour leadership was therefore faced with the following dilemma. The fascist offensive was developing and unless restrained would plunge Europe into another war. As a leadership it rejected not only the united front drive against the present Government, but also any energetic drive against the Government on the part of the forces of official Labour, because every active campaign on the part of official Labour is bound in the present situation, to stimulate the demand for the United Front. Fearing Fascism but rejecting the United Front, the Labour leaders advanced step by step to supporting the National Government as an instrument which might be used against Fascism.

Right Leaders support the Government Arms Programme

So as their fear of Fascism grew, the right wing Labour leaders' desire to huddle behind the Government grew in equal proportion. Already

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at the London Trades Council Conference in February, Citrine declared that it might be necessary for the Labour Movement " to support a certain measure of rearmament "—under the control of the National Government, of course. Then Mr. Findlay at the Scottish Trades Union Congress declared :

> I was brought up in a Christian household, but I am not prepared to say that I can take the advantages of this country without being ready to defend them if necessary with arms. It will be noted that there is no question here of arms being necessary to defend collective security, but to defend " this country."

In mid-summer the National Joint Council of Labour tried to bring pressure on the Labour Members of Parliament to vote for the arms estimates, but drew back when it encountered strong resistance. At the Trades Union Congress in September Mr. Findlay continued the campaign for support of the Government arms programme and tried to use the strong anti-fascist feelings of the Congress in order to win support.

> Would they be true to themselves if they tamely accepted the imposition of a dictatorship of a financial and military autocracy. If they were not so prepared, or if they could not satisfy themselves that by pacifism they could preserve their freedom, he suggested that it was only common sense to procure the best possible equipment for their fighters.

Mr. Findlay was not of course suggesting the " best possible equipment " for the Spanish militia. Indeed he was supporting the policy of an arms blockade. The best possible equipment was for the forces of the National Government—irrespective of the policy that this Government was pursuing. Mr. Bevin followed up Findlay's speech by declaring a few days later that in view of fascist aggression it was necessary for the General Council of the Trades Union Congress to consult with the Executive Committee of the Labour Party with a view to a reconsideration of policy. What this reconsideration involved was clearly indicated in the notes of Mr. John Marchbanks (another General Council member) in the *Railway Review* of September 25 :

> It was clearly indicated at the Plymouth Congress that the attitude of our organised movement on the question of war and peace, in view of the growing menace of Fascism, requires to be more clearly defined. The practical question at issue is whether the Labour Movement takes a pacifist view of the situation, or is prepared to say that the dangers are such as to justify the Government's programme of rearmament.

In the minds of the T.U.C. General Council and their supporters in the Labour Party Executive there was no dubiety as to what was necessary. The Labour Party opposition to rearmament was to cease and the Party under the plea of arms being necessary in order to defend democracy was to vote for the Arms Estimates.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Line up with the Government—the Appearance at Edinburgh

When the resolution was published, after long and heated sessions of the Labour Party Executive, it appeared as if this point of view had carried the day. There was of course the usual camouflage, and trimmings, but when the *Herald* announced in glaring headlines "Labour Draws Up New Policy. Efficient Defence Against Aggression" it appeared as if the General Council and their supporters had won all along the line. It was only in the course of the debate that the compromise character of the resolution was fully revealed. The main supporters of the resolution at the beginning of the debate, Hugh Dalton, Lord Strabolgi, and Charlie Dukes, argued on the basis that the resolution meant support of the arms programme of the Government. There is no doubt at all in the writer's mind, that if this had been the interpretation of a united Labour Party Executive it would still have been carried by a substantial majority for the great mass of Trade Union delegates are alarmed at the growing aggressiveness of the fascist Powers and do not see that support for the arms policy of the National Government means in no way putting a barrier in the path of this aggression, but will result on the contrary in helping forward that aggression.

Those delegates were not helped to arrive at a clear position by the pacifist opposition to the resolution. When Mr. Lansbury declares "They should bring even the dictatorship nations round the table and convince them, not by force, but by reason": when Lord Arnold attacks the indivisibility of peace and suggests that it would be possible for Britain to pursue a policy of splendid isolation in the event of a war; and when Dr. Salter roundly declared that it was wrong for Parliament to resist Charles I. on the ground that this resistance led to the dictatorship of Cromwell, it became absolutely clear that this type of pacifism was an escape from reality into a land of dreams. Its only effect is to drive trade unionists into the arms of the right wing.

The first breath of Socialist opposition to the resolution came from Jack Clayton of Bury. Clayton gave a detailed analysis of the foreign policy of the National Government and asked:

> Does the resolution instruct the Party in Parliament to vote for or against the Arms Programme? If so, what guarantee is there that the arms will be used to restrain the fascist Powers? May they not be used to assist them? Placing arms in the hands of this Government was like placing arms in the hands of a burglar in the hope that he may defend you against other burglars.

This speech brought Morrison up to declare on behalf of the Executive that

> We cannot satisfy ourselves that this Government is seeking collective security. We cannot be assured that these arms are for the purpose of defending democracy. This motion does not mean support of the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> Government's arms programme. That would imply immediately that you are in general agreement with the policy or absence of policy of the Government in foreign affairs.

Morrison also declared that the resolution meant opposition to the Government arms programme in Parliament although the manner of this opposition would be left to the M.P.s. They would decide whether to oppose by means of token reductions or by voting against the estimates as a whole. At a later stage of the Conference Attlee substantially supported Morrison's interpretation of the resolution.

The Reality—a Compromise of Conflicting Views

At this stage it became clear that the resolution was a compromise between two schools on the Executive. The line of those supporting the General Council was that arms are necessary to defend democracy and that the Government must be given arms in spite of the foreign policy which it was pursuing. As Bevin said in his intervention in the debate :

> If I am faced with the problem of arming this country I am prepared to face it. The first thing victorious Fascism destroys is us—the trade unions. We are not the Government, but I want to drive the Government to defend democracy against its will.

The line of Attlee and Morrison was that arms are necessary for collective security, but as there is no evidence that the Government is standing for collective security we cannot vote for its arms programme. The line between the two schools is not so wide as might be assumed. Attlee asked the Government to state its policy. Some strong pressure from the trade union bureaucracy, an assurance from the Government that it was really out for collective security and an all-European settlement, and the supporters of Morrison and Attlee could soon pass into the camp of Bevin and the T.U.C.

The *Daily Herald* leader, written on the day after the debate, was able to tell its readers what the two sets of supporters of the resolution stood for. It was not able to tell them, however, what the resolution meant. There are divergent interpretations, and only struggle will determine which will become the basis for the practice of the Labour Party.

The Arguments used for Support of the Government

In the meantime it is worth noting some of the characteristic arguments which were used in favour of the policy of voting for the Government Arms Programme. The most popular argument in the Union delegations —though not openly brought out in the Conference, went somewhat as follows :

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

" We know that the National Government is not a Government favourable to collective security, or to the democratic States in Europe. Nevertheless, Fascist arms are increasing and a Labour Government might find itself compelled to resort to self-defence in the first days of its existence. Now arms cannot be produced at a moment's notice. The arms factories have got to be made ready. It is therefore necessary to support the present arms policy of the National Government in order that the Labour Government will have at its disposal all the necessary means of defending democracy and peace."

Now what is the meaning of this argument? Is it suggested that the huge arms programme of the National Government is not sufficient and that British labour must bring pressure to bear upon it to make greater efforts in this direction?

Is it suggested that if the British Labour Movement refuses to vote for increased arms the National Government will sacrifice its imperialist interests and leave Britain defenceless? Surely it is evident that the National Government programme envisages not a sufficiency of arms to enable Britain to play its part in a collective system, but a sufficiency of arms to enable it to play an imperialist rôle independent of any collective system. So far from a Labour Government finding itself defenceless, it is more than likely to find itself saddled with an excess of arms over and above what is necessary to participate in the collective peace system.

But the essence of this technical argument is that the Labour Movement should vote arms to the British Government even if it knows that this Government is pursuing an anti-League and pro-Fascist policy. Under the plea that arms are necessary for the defence of democracy, it has to vote arms to a Government which will be prepared to use them for the destruction of democracy.

The preamble of the Edinburgh resolution declares amongst other things:

> When an opportunity occurred of vindicating the authority of the League of Nations against the aggressor, the British Government betrayed the League of Nations and Abyssinia and broke its pledge to the electors. The Labour Party can have no confidence in the Government's professions of loyalty to the League.
>
> The present weakness of the League is not due to any inherent faults in the Covenant and the League system, but to the disloyalty of some great powers and the vacillating policy of others.
>
> During the last five years while the international situation has steadily deteriorated the British Government in the Council and Assembly of the League, and at the Disarmament Conference has thrown away opportunity after opportunity of strengthening the League and establishing the foundations of peace.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Yet in face of that characterisation the General Council and its supporters in the Labour Party Executive want that party to vote for the arms policy of a Government disloyal to the League. Surely it is patent to any Labour Party supporter that once the Movement votes for the arms policy of such a Government it is encouraging that Government in its disloyalty to the League. It is making it more difficult to secure a reversal of this disloyal policy, let alone the replacement of the Government which is pursuing this policy.

A Working-Class Peace Policy

What are the elements of a sound working-class peace policy ? Firstly we think the winning of the majority of the people of Great Britain for the proposition enunciated in the preamble to the Edinburgh resolution.

> It is urgently necessary to form in Europe within the framework of the League a strong group of peaceful nations pledged to non-aggression and to a policy of mutual assistance against the aggressor and to a policy of close political and economic co-operation.

But what is necessary to make this policy a reality ? Surely unremitting opposition to the policy of the present Government which opposes such an all-European pact.

Take Eden's speech at the League Assembly on September 25. In this speech the Government is declared to be in favour of a Western Pact. This policy is in direct opposition to an All-European Security Pact such as is envisaged by the Labour Party Executive. It is the policy of a " free hand in the East " for Nazi Germany.

The Government is in favour of " striving for universality " as far as the League is concerned. This is the policy of hindering the co-operation of the peaceful countries within the League which the Labour Party advocates as being urgently necessary, on the plea that the League can only be strengthened by bringing back Germany and Japan. In effect this proposal means resistance to any efforts to strengthen the existing League and to restrain the Fascist Powers.

It was this policy of " striving for universality " that Litvinov had in mind when he said at Geneva :

> Can we declare compatible with the principle of equality of nations which is one of the foundation stones of the League, the ideology of a state founded on racial and national inequality and describing all peoples except its own as " sub-human." I would ask the supporters of " universality at any price " : Must we sacrifice all the fundamental principles of the League in order to adapt it to the theory and practice of such a State, or must we invite the latter itself to adapt its principles to the present ideology of the League. My reply at any rate is better a League without universality than universality without League principles. (Litvinov at the League Assembly, September 28.)

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At this Assembly also, Eden, to the great delight of the Nazis, supported the revision of treaties. This at the moment when every small State in Europe is trembling before Nazi aggression. Clearly the Labour policy of the co-operation of peaceful States demands an energetic struggle against the National Government.

What this Involves

Further, if the Labour Party believes it is urgently necessary to build up a bloc of peaceful Powers it will have to supplement this by revising its policy on the United Front. Co-operation between the Communist Government of the Soviet Union and certain capitalist Powers will only be effective in so far as that co-operation has the support of the overwhelming majority of people in the capitalist States so co-operating. This demands working-class unity on an international scale in order to impose a uniform policy on the various capitalist Governments. It also demands the gathering of the Peace forces in the various capitalist countries in a People's Front in order to defeat the pro-Fascist and anti-Soviet elements in their own country. Unless those in the Labour Movement who are fighting against support for the Government arms plan supplement that policy by supporting the United Front, victory will go to those who are out for a deal with the Government.

For the attitude of those Labour leaders who are for support of the Government's rearmament plans—an attitude which objectively strengthens the forces making for Fascism and War—derives from their rejection of the alternative policy of the United Front. The rejection of the United Front leaves the Labour leadership with only the following perspective: (1) That Fascism in Britain can only be staved off by a policy of moderation, rejecting the United Front, the development of the strike struggles and of mass movements generally ("Fascism is a remote danger as far as this country is concerned, if we only keep our heads and prevent our ranks from being split," Citrine). (2) That the National Government cannot be brought down, and we must wait until its term of office expires (Bevin's speech about preparing for a Labour Government in four years' time). (3) That because British institutions are democratic, the National Government will prefer to co-operate with democratic, rather than with Fascist, Europe.

The whole effect of this policy is to reduce the British Labour Movement to the status of a very junior partner in any imperialist venture or policy the National Government may venture upon, to cause it completely to desert the struggle for European democracy and peace, and by so doing to pursue a course which brings war nearer.

"But democracy must be defended against Fascism" cry the Labour leaders. Undoubtedly it must. But the National Government cannot

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

act as the instrument of this defence. The fact that the institutions of present day Britain are of a capitalist democratic character is a tribute to the political struggles waged by the British people in the past. It is not a proof that the National Government is out to strengthen the League to defend democracy (either at home or abroad) and European peace. The orientation of the British capitalist class is determined not by their democratic sentiments (if such they possess), but by their conception of what would best serve their imperialist interests. This appears to be at the moment: (1) the development of a Western Security Pact; and (2) a free hand for Germany on the East involving the disruption of the Franco-Soviet Pact. This policy means not the defence of democracy, but its destruction.

What the right wing fails to recognise is that the defence of democracy in Britain involves a struggle on two fronts (nationally and internationally). It means a pact of mutual assistance underpinning the League Covenant and the establishment of international unity. It means the building of a People's Front to defeat the pro-Fascist elements in Great Britain and to replace the National Government by a Labour Government. To reject the United Front and the People's Front is to reject the mobilisation of all the forces in the struggle for democracy and peace.

The Three Pillars of Peace

The three pillars of a successful peace policy are therefore (1) the formation of a peace bloc within the League, (2) international working-class unity, (3) the formation of a People's Front on the basis of the United Front. In the last analysis the official Labour Movement is confronted with the choice of unity of the working class for peace or unity with the National Government for war. And so the fight between the supporters of these two lines goes on.

Mr. Marchbank, we notice, is saying in the *Railway Review;* (Oct. 17) that the National Council of Labour must clear this matter up—in the sense of seeing to it that the resolution is not accepted as a mandate to continue opposing the Government's rearmament programme. Mr. Morrison, on the other hand affirms:

> One must always allow new circumstances, but the Parliamentary Party has not yet been asked by the Party Conference to support the Government's competitive rearmament programme and it will remain free to determine, according to the circumstances of the time, whether it will vote against the service estimate *en bloc* or whether it will express its dissension from Government policy by moving token reductions and divide the House upon them. (*Forward*, October 17.)

Obviously the Labour Party will be politically impotent unless this matter is cleared up. Equally obviously it is not the business of the National Council of Labour to clear it up, but a special conference, based

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on the fullest consultation with the working class, with full expression in voting and speaking of minorities in trade union delegations. If that were done the disastrous policy of making the Labour Movement the appendage of the National Government could be decisively defeated and a really constructive Peace Policy capable of rallying the majority of the British people adopted. Until that is done, Labour's Foreign Policy is a " babel of tongues "—a fact that can only help reaction, Fascism and War.

SOLD OUT !

THE October issue of the LABOUR MONTHLY was completely sold out almost before the month was half gone by. This means that there was an increased sale for the October issue of no less than two hundred and fifty as compared with September. The increased demand came from every direction, showing the widening interest in all sides in Labour politics—particularly of the Left Wing.

EDINBURGH results are provoking controversy everywhere. This number contains three articles treating of its various aspects. Professor Laski's article will undoubtedly arouse great interest particularly amongst Labour Party members.

ARE you one of that growing band of those who not only take the LABOUR MONTHLY regularly *but sell it regularly*? If not, why not send in IMMEDIATELY for a supply, on sale or return, of three or more copies at 4½d. a copy to sell amongst those you regularly meet, in your trade union, co-operative, Labour Party branch, or other political organisation.

MEETINGS are being arranged in your area. See that whoever is in charge of the literature stall has agreed to order a supply of the LABOUR MONTHLY and prominently to display them. Posters of the current number are always available.

THERE are a hundred ways of increasing sales. Choose the one you think you can do best.

WRITE

immediately for more copies—a good extra supply has been printed this month—to 7 John Street, London, W.C.1.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IS PALESTINE PROSPEROUS ?

By BRITISH RESIDENT

[*The* LABOUR MONTHLY *publishes below a portion of a pamphlet now going through the press whose subject matter deals with the theme indicated by the title to this article. In addition to giving the background of the whole situation in Palestine, the author of this pamphlet provides illuminating facts both with regard to the conditions of the still nomad sections of the population, the Bedouin, and also of the urban population, just as he does for the Arab peasantry below. We are sure that these facts and information will be of great value in enabling readers to assess the character of the present Palestine situation ; they provide them with authoritative arguments to refute the view which has been sedulously fostered that in Palestine, even under the present system of imperialist control, there is still plenty of room for many more Jewish people ; that such unrestricted immigration not only does not cause any expropriation of Arabs from their land or displacement from their work with its consequential poverty, but that it will bring still further prosperity and a higher standard of living to the whole of Palestine. These claims the writer deals with exhaustively and shows that the very opposite is the truth.*]

> Judged purely from the Arab point of view, their economic position was never as strong as it is to-day, and they were never more firmly rooted in the soil than they are to-day. (Mr. T. Williams in the House of Commons Debate of June 19th, 1936.)
>
> The wages paid in Palestine since the Jews were introduced are treble or even quadruple what they were when they first went there. The Arabs are enjoying a much higher standard of living than they had before. (Mr. Lloyd George in the same Debate.)
>
> It is not, in my opinion, at all unfair to compare what is happening in Palestine with what is happening in Kenya. In both these countries you are dealing with the impact of an economically more active and more highly developed race upon a more primitive and backward race. Undoubtedly that impact means more development, more progress, more prosperity for the backward people as well. (Mr. Amery in the same Debate.)

ZIONISTS often declare: "Even granted that Zionism has assisted British imperialism in thwarting the Arabs in their struggle for independence, from the Arab point of view that disadvantage has been amply compensated by the prosperity which Jewish immigration and the introduction of Jewish capital have brought to them."

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This argument—the argument "a prosperiori"—is worth considering in some detail. It is at present the favourite weapon in the armoury of Zionist propagandists and their sympathisers. An examination of the argument should at the same time lay bare the effect of British rule and Jewish immigration upon the economic situation of the Arabs, and show how far, from an economic point of view, their demands for independence from British rule and the stoppage of Jewish immigration are justified.

In order to judge how far the present reported prosperity of the Palestine Arabs is fact or myth, it will be worth while to consider one by one the various sections of the Arab population,[1] and to inquire how far each has become prosperous through Jewish immigration.

Landlords, Tenants, and Small-holders.

Many Arab landowners have certainly become prosperous by selling their land to Jews. It was estimated by the Jewish Agency for Palestine[2] that between 1918 and 1930 about 175,000 acres of agricultural land were bought by Jews from Arabs at a total cost of not less than £3,000,000.

The official figures for Jewish land purchases since 1930 are as follows :

	Area purchased (approximate) in acres	Price paid (approximate) £
1931	4,500	100,000
1932	4,700	149,000
1933	8,000	855,000
1934	15,500	1,548,000
1935	18,200	1,699,000

That is to say that since 1930 an additional 50,900 acres have been bought at a cost of an additional £4,351,000. The Jews are now officially estimated to possess about 300,000 acres out of a total cultivable area of about 3,000,000 acres, or 10 per cent. The land which they possess is all situated in the most fertile areas of Palestine. According to evidence given by Dr. Ruppin before the Shaw Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August, 1929, " of the land purchased by the Jews . . . . relatively small areas not exceeding 10 per cent. (i.e., 10 per cent. of the total land purchased) were acquired from peasants. The other areas have been acquired from owners of large estates most of whom live outside Palestine and, in consequence, leased their land or allowed it to be worked on various conditions of tenure." That is to say that up to 1929 at least 90 per cent. of the land bought by Jews from Arabs was bought from large landlords, most of whom were absentees. One of the most considerable of such purchases was of twenty-two villages in the Vale of Esdraelon—a total area of about 50,000 acres—which were sold

[1] Treatment of the other sections, the Bedouin and the urban population, will be found in the pamphlet (see inside front cover of this issue).

[2] In a pamphlet called *Financial Aspects of Jewish Reconstruction in Palestine* : How the Arabs have benefited through Jewish Immigration.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

between 1921 and 1925 for £726,000 by the family of Sursoq, rich Christian Arabs living in Beirut.[3] The already prosperous Sursoqs certainly became more prosperous as a result of this sale. What happened to the villagers?

Legally, according to a law which remained in force from 1921, the Palestine Government might only consent to the sale of land which was leased if it was satisfied that the tenant in occupation would retain sufficient land for the maintenance of himself and his family. In fact, however, according to evidence given to the Shaw Commission, this law was always ineffective. The purchasers regularly bribed the tenants to waïve their right to be left with land sufficient for their maintenance. In the case of the particular sale referred to, the Jews stated that they paid more than £30,000 as compensat on to the tenants who lost their land. The total number of tenant families displaced by this sale, according to the Jewish Agency was about 750: according to the Arab Executive the total was about 1,750 families. That is to say that the compensation received by the Arab tenan s for having the land which they cultivated —probably in most cases their only source of livelihood—and where they had lived for generations, sold over their heads, was between £17 and £40 per family. The payment received by the landowners for losing their rents was £726,000.

Who is made prosperous by Jewish immigration? According to the Jewish Agency's evidence, the depressed tenants found land in the same district which they could cultivate. According to the evidence of the Arab Executive a large number of the tenants emigrated to America, and others found temporary employment as stone cutters and lime burners in connection with the construction of new buildings, but would have no occupation to turn to when these were completed. In view of the congestion on the land occupied by Arabs the evidence of the Arab Executive seems, *prima facie*, to be more likely to represent the facts than the evidence of the Jewish Agency. The enquiry of a Commission on the Economic Condition of Agriculturalists in 104 Arab villages, which reported in 1930, established that of 23,573 families resident in those villages 6,940 families owned no land and were dependent for a livelihood upon work as labourers. Of the remaining 16,633 families who owned and cultivated land, the average holding was $18\frac{3}{4}$ acres per family. The estimate of the minimum holding necessary to support a family varies, but the general opinion of experts is that on unirrigated land in Palestine, with Arab methods of cultivation, about 30 or 40 acres are required.[4] That is to say that the average Arab holding in 1930 was about half the minimum subsistence area. Since 1930 the Arab peasant

[3] Report on the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August, 1929 (Cmd. 3530): page 117.

[4] Sir John Hope Simpson's Report on Immigration, Land Settlement, etc. (1930).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

population has increased and the area available for them to cultivate has decreased on account of further Jewish purchases. In view of this shortage of land among Arabs it is more likely that the tenants dispossessed by the Sursoq sale eventually drifted to the towns, probably to Haifa, to look for work than that they found land to cultivate in the same district—particularly in view of the great expansion of Haifa during the last few years. It may be assumed that the normal effect on the Arab tenant of the sale of the land which he cultivated by an absentee landlord is to force him to emigrate to the towns to find work and to become absorbed in the proletariat.

The effect of the sale of the Sursoq lands upon the bedouin, who, while these villages were inhabited by Arabs, used to come down from the hills after harvest and pasture their flocks on the village lands, was to deprive them of this right.

One particularly iniquitous aspect of the sale of the Sursoq land was that the real owners of part at any rate of the land sold were, apparently, not the Sursoqs, but the cultivators. Under the Turkish régime it had been the practice of peasants who owned land to make an arrangement with the Sultan or with some powerful landowner whereby they admitted his overlordship, and thus obtained, in return for an annual rent, protection against extortion and other benefits. In this way " persons of importance and position in the Ottoman Empire acquired the legal title to large tracts of land which for generations and in some cases for centuries had been in the undisturbed and undisputed possession of peasants who, though by the new arrangement they surrendered their prescriptive rights over the land which they cultivated, had undoubtedly a strong moral claim to be allowed to continue in occupation of those lands."[5]

What has been done by the Palestine Government for the cultivators who have been dispossessed by these sales of land ? Until 1929 nothing effective was done. In 1929 an Ordinance was enacted which attempted to ensure that cultivators received compensation for the land they lost. This compensation was usually quite inadequate to support them and their families for any length of time. Under pressure from the Shaw and Hope-Simpson Commissions which visited Palestine after the 1929 disturbances and pointed out that one of the causes of Arab-Jew hostility was the increasing Arab landlessness legislation was passed the intention of which was to make it impossible for a landlord to sell over his tenant's head the minimum area of land necessary for his subsistence. This legislation appears to have had the effect of slowing down the rate of Arab land sales but not of stopping them altogether. The figures quoted above show that in the years 1931-1935 about 50 000 acres were sold by Arabs to Jews.

[5]Report of the Shaw Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August, 1929 : p. 120

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Another scheme arising out of the reports of these Commissions was launched a few years ago. Its aim was to resettle on the land Arab tenants who had been dispossessed. It was a fine-sounding scheme which was to cost £250,000, and a £2,000,000 loan was voted by the British Government partly for this purpose.

When it came to the settling of the Arabs, applications for admission to the register of landless Arabs were received from 3,271 families, of which only 664 were accepted by the Palestine Government. The rejection of the remaining 2,607 applications appears to have been due to the Government's refusal to include in its definition of "landless Arab" any head of a family (*a*) who still retained enough land to provide him (in the Government's opinion) with a livelihood ; (*b*) who, though he had lost all his land, had found work elsewhere. That is to say that landless Arabs who had drifted to the towns and become proletarians were left to the fate of proletarians : to have a job at two or three shillings a day when there was work going, and when there was none to be destitute.

Of the 664 families whom the Government has registered as landless up to the present, not more than a hundred have in fact been settled at a total cost of about £11,000 on land for which they have to pay rent and taxes to the Government. They also have to pay back to the Government the cost of the ploughing animals and agricultural implements with which the Government has provided them. The net income which they will be able to derive from the land on which they are settled will be, at best, the bare minimum necessary for their subsistence. They have lost their independence and homes and have been moved from the land which they, and probably their ancestors, cultivated. They are reduced to the position of paupers kept alive, so long as they continue to work, by the Government. The normal attitude among Arabs, who have become landless, to these settlement schemes is that they would rather starve than live as the Government's serfs. It is not surprising, therefore, to read in the Annual Report of the Palestine Government for 1935 that, "as none of the remaining registered Arabs (i.e., in addition to the one hundred families already settled) have signified their willingness to take up holdings upon Government estates, no new schemes have been put in hand this year."

This statement of the Government has, of course, been seized upon by the Zionist press and interpreted to mean that there are no more landless Arabs ; that there is no landless Arab problem ; that there is no Arab problem at all ; that all Arab objections to Zionist colonisation are fictitious—and anything else that they want to believe. What the statement in fact means is that the Government's scheme for resettling landless Arabs has broken down, since the Arabs prefer to be exploited

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for two or three shillings a day in the towns, or even to starve (in both of which cases they retain a degree of independence), than to work in one of the Government's labour camps.

A typical case of the sort of misery produced by the dispossession of Arab cultivators is given in the Government's Annual Report for 1935. An area of about 3,000 acres in Haifa sub-district, owned by one of the Sursoq family of Beirut and cultivated by about sixty families of a tribe called the Arab Zubeidat, and by some fellahin, was sold in 1925 over the heads of the tenants to a Zionist organisation called the Palestine Land Development Company. The tenants were paid about £1,800, or less than £30 per family, as compensation by the Company. A dispute arose between the Arab Zubeidat and the Company in regard to a further area of 1,000 acres which the Company claimed had been included in, and the Arabs claimed had been excluded from, the transfer. In 1927, the Jews lodged a criminal action against two Arabs of the tribe who tried to prevent Jews from ploughing on the disputed area. The Court gave judgment in favour of the Jews. The Arabs appealed against this judgment, and in 1929 the Court returned the case to the Land Court for rehearing. In 1933 judgment was again given by the Land Court in favour of the Jews. The Arabs again appealed, and in 1934, the Court of Appeal confirmed the judgment of the Land Court. An action was then brought by the Jews for the eviction of the Arabs. Eviction was ordered in November, 1934, and carried out in January, 1935, by a strong police force. The Arabs tried to resist eviction by stoning the police. The police fired and killed an Arab. The rest of the Arabs were then evicted.

In 1931 the Government had offered to resettle fourteen of these Arab families on Government land in the Beisan Sub-district (about 30 miles to the East). This offer was refused by the Arabs because, as they said, they did not want to leave the lands where they had been born and reared and start to live and cultivate in a new place and under Government control in a climate that was too hot for them. The Government does not state whether it has renewed its offer of resettlement.

The present position appears to be that these Arabs—sixty or more families—are left with 300 acres of cultivable land and 700 acres of forest which they possessed in addition to the 4,000 acres which they have lost, in the neighbourhood of their old lands, and no other source of livelihood: an average of five acres per family, or about one-sixth of what is normally estimated to be the minimum area on which a family can support itself.

This instance is typical, not exceptional. The process of Jewish settlement frequently involves for the Arab tenants the miserable round of sale by absentee landlords, inadequate compensation, expensive law-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

suits dragging out over many years, police evictions, accompanied sometimes by shooting, and finally drifting to the towns to be exploited by Jewish or Arab capitalists or by the Government. So long as Jewish land purchases continue, involving this tension and conflict between the Jews and the dispossessed Arabs, you cannot hope to see anything but tension and conflict in the general relations between Jews and Arabs.

In the last few years sales of land by small-holders have increased. According to Zionists when a small-holder sells his land to them he only sells part of it and is able, with the capital which he gets by the sale, to develop the part which he retains. This is very nice in theory and may sometimes happen in practice. But it also frequently happens in practice that a small-holder sells all the land which he possesses ; runs through the money which he receives for it in a few months or uses it to pay his debts ; and is then forced, like the dispossessed tenant, to drift to the town, with the alternative of finding underpaid work or destitution.

The Arab small-holder has every inducement to sell his land. One strong motive is that the price which the Jews offer is usually far in excess of the real value of the land : (the average price paid by the Jews for land bought from Arabs during the last three years is about £100 per acre.) But the chief motive is his own poverty. According to investigations made by Sir John Hope-Simpson in 1930 the average gross income of an Arab peasant in Palestine was £29 4s. 0d. The average cost of production of his cultivation was £22. The average burden of debt was £8. The average burden of taxation was £5. The average cost of living for a family of six (the minimum necessary to support life) was reckoned as £26. That is to say the average minimum necessary expenditure of a peasant (£61) was in 1930 estimated to be more than twice his average gross income. Since 1930 the economic position of peasants has probably slightly improved. Prices of agricultural products have risen, so the peasant's average gross income has increased. Taxation has been somewhat reduced. But substantially the picture given in Sir John Hope-Simpson's report is a true one. That is to say the average expenditure of the peasant on cost of living must be considerably less than the £26 per annum which has been reckoned as the minimum necessary for subsistence[6]; he is always in debt : (in 1930, the total debt of the Arab peasant population of Palestine was estimated by the Palestine Government's Commission on the Economic Condition of Agriculturalists at £2,000,000 : the normal rate of interest charged by moneylenders varies between 30 per cent. per annum and 50 per cent. on a sum borrowed at the time of sowing and repaid at harvest) : he is always in arrears with taxes : he never has any capital of his own to develop his land and is seldom in a position to borrow any.

[6]The *Economist* (Oct. 10) however claims that the cost of living "has suddenly climbed in 3 months to the level ruling 3 years ago."

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Insufficiency of land, lack of capital to develop the land, debt and excessive taxation are the chief causes of the poverty of Arab peasants. The Commission on the Economic Condition of Agriculturalists referred to reported that, out of 27,573 families visited in 104 villages, only 5,477 families had enough land to support themselves without finding additional work elsewhere. Sir John Hope-Simpson, writing on the subject of land-shortage among Arab peasants, remarked :

> There is also a progressive diminution in the areas of holdings ; in every village visited there were complaints on this score. Portions of the holdings have been sold either to pay off debts or to pay the Government taxes or to obtain the wherewithal to keep the family alive.
>
> The population of the villages is increasing faster than in Turkish times, owing in large measure to the cessation of conscription. There is consequently increasing competition for land, and division of holdings among the increased number of members of the family.

This increase in the Arab population since the war is often used by Zionists as evidence of the increased prosperity of the Arabs, due to Jewish immigration. In fact, however, at any rate as far as the village population is concerned, it is a cause of increased poverty. The cessation of conscription is not, of course, the only cause of the increase of population; the Government's health services, restricted though they are, have done something to lower the death-rate and to decrease infant mortality. But prolongation of life without at least proportional expansion of the means of life is a doubtful benefit.

The Commission on the Economic Condition of Agriculturalists recommended that an income tax should be imposed with a view to improving the miserable economic condition of Arab peasants. An expert was sent from England to look into the question, but vested interests were too strong and the proposed income tax was shelved. The result is that the burden of taxation on agriculturalists is out of all proportion to their capacity to pay, while the rich Jewish entrepreneur and highly paid British official get off almost scot free. One example of the way in which small-holders living in the neighbourhood of towns are driven by the Government to sell their lands to Jews is by imposing taxes on those lands at urban rates, although the land is used for agriculture. It was pointed out by Mr. Nevile Barbour, writing to the *Palestine Post* in July, 1936, that the annual tax on agricultural land in a village near Jerusalem has increased in the last few years from 3s. 4d. per acre to £5 4s. per acre, and again to £8 per acre. The annual net income from the land is probably between £1 and £2 per acre. At such a rate of taxation cultivation is of course impossible and the cultivator has no alternative but to sell.

It is of interest to contrast the economic position of the Arab peasant with that of the Jewish agricultural settler. The following are data in

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

regard to the annual income and expenditure in three Jewish settlements collected by the Commission on the Economic Condition of Agriculturalists, together with the corresponding figures for the average Arab peasant, collected by the same Commission. The three settlements referred to are co-operative settlements, and the figures in the first column refer in their case to the average share of a family or individual in the total income of the settlement. The figures in the next four columns refer to the average share of a family or individual in the expenditure of the settlement upon the various items mentioned. It will be observed that the average annual deficit of the Arab peasant is £22.650 mils. This is, of course, an impossible figure, and is probably to be explained partly by the fact that the average Arab peasant family actually spends much less than £36 a year on cost of living. (*figures of pre-1930 price fall.*)

		Expenditure.				
Settlement	Gross Income	Cost of Living	Communal Taxes and Rent	Interest on Debt.	Cost of Production	Balance or Deficit
Yavriel (per family of 6.)	£121	£33 (Farm produce, £26; clothing, £7.)	£18	£4	£57	+£9
Kinnereth (per family of 6.)	£244	£73 (Farm produce, £27: Clothing, £46.)	£25	£4	£141	+£1
Ginegar (per member of group.)	£83	£49 (Farm produce, £14: Clothing £6. Other requirements, £14. Social and cultural expenditure, £16.)	£7	£3	£24	nil
Arab Peasant (per family.)	£38.350 mils.	£36	£5	£8	£22	−£22.650 mils.

These figures, though only estimates, and probably not entirely accurate as regards the present situation (owing to a rise in prices, reduction in taxation, etc.), show one thing pretty plainly, namely, that the average Jewish agricultural settler, though not rich, enjoys at present economic security, and the average Arab peasant does not. The average Arab peasant obviously does not possess an income sufficient to provide him with the bare necessities of life. The Jewish settler has an income sufficient to meet these necessities, with something to spare (in two cases out of the three selected) for comforts and pleasures. The figures also show that by failing to give economic security to the Arab peasant the Government is responsible for a situation in which the Arab is practically forced to sell his land to the Jews when a good price is offered him. The Government is in this way in alliance with Zionism to deprive the Arab of his lands and to make them available for Jewish settlement; and at the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

same time to create a landless proletariat to be exploited by itself, and by Jewish, and (to a less extent) by British and Arab, capitalists.

It is true that most of the Arab peasants who have drifted into the towns and work intermittently at a wage of two to three shillings a day receive, while they are in work, a money wage which is more than the income, reckoned in terms of money, which they got from their land when they worked as peasants. Against this must be set the fact that the old form of their lives has been broken up: that they are cut off from the wheat and olives, fruit and vegetables, which as peasants they had ready to hand and which they must now buy in the market at high prices: (the cost of living in Jaffa and Jerusalem is high; in Haifa at least as high as in English towns); that many of them now have to live in tin huts instead of in stone houses; that they have lost the land which gave them the assurance of a *permanent* livelihood—however miserable in terms of money that livelihood may have been. Now they are at the mercy of all the currents of capitalism. From 1933 until 1935 there was a boom in Palestine—chiefly on account of the unnaturally large influx of capital, brought by immigrants from Germany. Towards the end of 1935 a depression seemed to be beginning.

Indeed, according to the *Economist* of October 10, at the time of the outbreak of the strike "a first-class economic crisis was already in full swing." This crisis began in the autumn of 1935, when the Mediterranean tension reached its climax. By the end of the year it was officially estimated that 6,000 Jews, or 6 per cent. of the total employable Jewish population, was unemployed. This depression the strike has of course intensified. The following figures show the sharp recession in foreign trade during the second quarter of 1936:

	1935 (April-June)	1936
Imports	£P4,255,929	£P3,000,686
Exports	£P714,863	£P218,862

The two processes, the sale of Arab lands and the industrialisation of Palestine, are complementary. Zionist industrialism, and Government ports, roads, and railways, require an Arab proletariat, and the proletariat which they require is created by Zionist land purchases. The British Government backs Zionist activities for the reasons of imperial strategy referred to by Mr. Amery, and for business reasons. A Zionist industrialised Palestine makes a far better market for British goods and a far more profitable field for British investment than a purely Arab peasant Palestine could have made. Presumably, therefore, this mutually profitable partnership between Britain and Zionism that has now lasted for sixteen years will not be terminated by anything short of national revolution in Palestine or social revolution in England.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE ENGLISH TRADITION

By R. PAGE ARNOT

ENGLAND! A word of power. A name deeply engraved on the minds of men, whether murmured with love, whispered in fear, shouted with hatred. Bringing a picture of green fields and hedges to the soldier stationed beneath burning desert skies, of home and loved ones to those who go down to the sea in ships. And for those at home? For the privileged few, wealth and luxury. For the great mass insecurity and doubt. For many the grey days of endless anxiety, the soul-destroying burden of unemployment, the hideous Means Test.

THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND! A great nation, millions of men and women desiring above all to live in freedom, in peace and friendship.

A people with a great history, great achievements, great traditions. And with even greater aspirations, not yet fulfilled, but which shall be fulfilled. A people whose record through the centuries is the arduous and stubborn struggle against tyranny and oppression, the ceaseless effort of the common men and women to rise out of poverty and degradation into happiness and freedom, to make our country a Free and Merry England.

Let us remind you of the great figures and great scenes of English history.

Let us modern Londoners not forget that the liberty we have to-day was not given to us from above, but was won by the resolute courage and undaunted endurance of our forefathers in the struggle against tyrants.—(The March of English History—A Message to You from the Communist Party.)

THE London bourgeois press mocked at the Communist Party when they issued this message on the day of the march to the West End of London, to Hyde Park. But over 8,000 workers joined the ranks of the Communist Party that same day.

Two weeks later, this time in London's East End, the masses, with Communists in the van, stopped the Mosley Blackshirts in their march. In hundreds of thousands the Londoners tore up the pavements, formed barricades, and under the slogan "They Shall Not Pass!" formed a living wall which could not be broken by the 10,000 police who accompanied the miserable 2,500 Blackshirts.

The press and the bourgeoisie have been proved wrong.

Why did they endeavour to ridicule the Communist Party's message? Because they have always sought to show the great traditions of the working class struggle as something "foreign," and to exhibit the fight of the whole people as "inspired by foreigners"; whilst they themselves have tried to foist upon England, ideas and institutions alien to that nation under the pretext that they, the ruling groups, were the bearers

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of this great tradition of the English people. Now the tables are turned. The Communists have claimed their rightful place in the great tradition, the heritage which is theirs.

The idea that this is only a stunt, something to be mocked at, can only be put forward by those who imagine that Communism means the rejection of the nation[1] and of all the traditions of the past, or by those who are profoundly ignorant of what the deep traditions of England mean. But Communism which seeks the ending of capitalist class rule in order to build a free Socialist England by no means rejects the best cultural achievements of the past, still less the achievements of the mass of the people won by struggle.

What are these traditions that are peculiarly English? What are these things that have made the national character? Certainly they are not the records of Sir John Hawkins, who started the slave trade, or of "the bloody Jeffries," or of the corrupt Walpole, men whose lineal successors are still to be found to-day amid the ruling class.

Certainly, they are not the version of English history officially taught by official historians, for whom everything in English history "is a good thing," whose shallow idealism recalls Dr. Pangloss with his "everything for the best, in the best of all possible worlds." Nor is it to be found in what is dished out in numerous school books and stalely repeated by politicians in their perorations. No, the clue to the national character, to the noble traditions of England, has been given primarily by one who came here, as an exile, to spend the greater part of his life amongst the English and who studied most profoundly our traditions and our history—Karl Marx, the greatest revolutionary and greatest thinker of mankind.

Marx was the representative of *international* humanity precisely because he was able, as none other, to draw *from each nation* whatever was best in it. From England's rich history he drew more than from any other land, and he gave back to the English a gift which they have yet to use fully—the clue to their past, and to their future.

Ever since the decline of feudalism, the English nation has had its common territory, its common tongue, "the tongue that Shakespeare spoke," its single economic life, its common culture, and all this to a degree that is found in few other countries of the world. Many have gone out from England in these last 500 years. Few have come to it. Heterogeneous this people is not; but homogeneous to the greatest extent. Revolution is native to its soil. Communism in the first utopia,

[1]Communism is never Cosmopolitan, but always *international*. The most famous slogan of Marx and Engels runs "Proletarians of all Countries, Unite!" The usual version, "Workers of the World" is not only incorrect as a translation, but a vulgarising of Marx into cosmopolitanism.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the golden book of Thomas More, arises amongst the modern nations first of all in the land of the English. Trade unionism was born in England. The Co-operative Movement was born in England. The whole modern working class movement now in every country first appeared on English soil. It is for the gentlemen of the ruling class, the millionaires who own the newspapers and juggle with their millions in the city, to justify their strange imports, their bringing in of fascism and other elements alien to our traditions. They, not the Communists, must stand before the bar of history for their attempt to degrade the higher culture of England by an admixture of the lower culture of barbaric fascism.

Since the very beginnings of national consciousness there has been no struggle for national independence against an army of occupation, no internal enmity of ill-assorted groups with differing traditions, no necessity to throw off the shackles of a foreign yoke, no national heroes of the type of Joan of Arc in France, of Sir William Wallace in Scotland, or Llewelyn the Great in Wales. Therefore, all the struggles have been for *class independence*, for *class liberties* against the tyranny of a native ruling class and native exploiters. It has been Englishmen against Englishmen throughout. The great figures of English historic struggle in arms are not the soldiers of the greedy oligarchy, like the boasted Clive or Wellington, but those who led the struggle against class oppressors in their own country.

Hence, liberty is the noble tradition of England, and liberty won by struggle of class against class. And if that liberty which began at home, too often ended at home, it is for us in this generation to strengthen it at home and to extend it abroad. To make the Empire as free as England and to make England as free as the Soviet Union, this is a task worthy of the inheritors of the English tradition. For in the new Constitution of the U.S.S.R., with its right to work, right to rest and leisure, right to maintenance in old age, in sickness and in disablement, right to education, right of association, right of asylum ; its equal rights for sex, for nationality ; its freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of street processions and demonstrations, there is a liberty enormously enlarged beyond the scope of what we have won as yet, but nevertheless corresponding to the English spirit. The example of the U.S.S.R. should inspire the English spirit to new efforts, to a higher ascent along its mountain path.

From the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 the path climbs to the great revolutionaries of the Commonwealth period, to our own revolutionary forefathers fighting for the Charter, to the last struggle that we foresee amid this present fight against war and fascism.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Poets

From the time when the wide-travelled Geoffrey Chaucer (but yet no Englishman Italianate, like Mosley or Rennel Rodd) told of the youth whose cheek was "like the meads in May," the English soil, its trees and fields, its hills and dales, its streams and lakes, have enchanted poets and writers; and amongst them many of the very best have found it hard that this soil should bear a people that is other than free and happy. The hatred for feudal monarchy that emerges unmistakably in Shakespeare becomes in Milton the burning zeal of the puritan fighter for liberty, the State Secretary to the Lord Protector Cromwell. "God-gifted organ-voice of England, Milton" is no favourite amongst the quotation-mongers of the ruling class; nor have they enjoyed his praise of the "matchless fortitude" of Oliver Cromwell. It was Cromwell who said to the Fabians of his day and of all times: "You must not only strike the iron when it is hot, but make it hot by striking." It was Milton who wrote:

> Cyriack, this three years' day, these eyes, though clear,
> To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
> Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;
> Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
> Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year,
> Or man, or woman . . . . . What supports me Dost thou ask?
> The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied
> In liberty's defence, my noble task,
> Of which all Europe rings from side to side.
> This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask
> Content, though blind, had I no better guide.

But though the ruling class have sought to reduce the poets to mere unfeathered songsters, have published their works in politically expurgated and abridged editions, the revolutionary poets of England have in a great company expressed the spirit of England. And the present indifference to poetry that is so widespread in our country has arisen partly because these revolutionary traditions have been smothered and hidden by technical rubbish and emasculating commentaries.

Yet when a one-time revolutionary poet, losing his principles along with his poetic powers, lent himself, no longer like a flame but a burnt-out cinder, to the uses of reaction, the generous wrath of the young Browning expressed itself in "Just for a handful of silver he left us," in which he says:

> Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
> Burns, Shelley, were with us,—They watch from their graves!
> He alone breaks from the van and the freeman,
> He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!

The greatest poet and prose writer of the last half of the nineteenth century, William Morris, continued that tradition, refused the Laureate-ship that Wordsworth had stooped to wear, raised the struggle for liberty

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to the pitch of revolutionary class struggle once more, and, in the name of Marxism, ever calling himself a Communist, struck full and hard at the crest of capitalism.

The Philosophers

Those who pretend that Communism is not rooted in English soil will sometimes exclaim: "Look at their very philosophic basis, their dialectical materialism, their materialist conception of history; how odious it sounds, how false, how foreign." This ignorant malice does not result from a profound study by opponents of the Communist world outlook. For we need not credit them with more than a confident belief that "materialism" will grate harshly upon the ears of their readers, and can therefore safely be assigned to "foreign influence" as an "un-English" method of thought.

"And yet," as Engels said, "the original home of all modern materialism, from the seventeenth century onwards, is England"; while, in his *Holy Family*, written nearly a century ago, Karl Marx pointed out:

> Materialism is the natural-born son of Great Britain. Already the British schoolman, Duns Scotus, asked "whether it was impossible for matter to think?
>
> . . . The real progenitor of English materialism is Bacon. To him natural philosophy is the only true philosophy, and physics based upon the experience of the senses is the chiefest part of natural philosophy. . .
>
> Hobbes is the man who systematises Baconian materialism. . .
>
> Hobbes had systematised Bacon, without, however, furnishing a proof for Bacon's fundamental principle, the origin of all human knowledge from the world of sensation. It was Locke who, in his *Essay on the Human Understanding*, supplied this proof.
>
> Hobbes had shattered the theistic prejudices of Baconian materialism; Collins, Dodwall, Coward, Hartley, Priestley similarly shattered the last theological bars that still hemmed in Locke's sensationalism.

"Thus, Karl Marx wrote," concludes Engels, "about the British origin of modern materialism. If Englishmen nowadays do not exactly relish the compliment he paid their ancestors, more's the pity." And Engels goes on to refer to the consolation it may be to many "to learn that these new-fangled notions are not of foreign origin, are not 'made in Germany' like so many articles of daily use, but are undoubtedly Old English, and that their British originators two hundred years ago went a good deal further than their descendants now dare to venture."

Science

Precisely because of this revolutionary tradition in English philosophy, as finally developed into dialectic and historic materialism by Marx and Engels, Communists are able to appreciate not only the working-class

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

revolutionary traditions, but the great historic features and figures of the bourgeois class.

The great achievements of science from the seventeenth century to the present day can be more rightly claimed as a heritage of the Communists than by those of the ruling class who, like Sir Josiah Stamp at the British Association, wish to curb the development of science in relation to society.

In the light of historical materialism, the fabled Issac Newton " voyaging through strange seas of thought alone " becomes a real figure, one in a great company of scientists and practical men of the bourgeoisie who were responding to the needs of their age, and whose work was to unfetter the forces of production which their degenerate successors are trying to restrict and to destroy. No longer unstudied in their dusty niches (the teaching of the history of the sciences has hardly begun in our universities), the great names of astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, anatomy, physiology, mechanics, navigation and engineering are made to live in the sunlight of historic materialism.[2]

These are the men, the foremost amongst the bourgeoisie, who helped to liberate the forces of production from their feudal chains, just as at the present day, the foremost of the working-class are striving to liberate the productive forces from the new chains of finance-capital and fascism. In each case, the liberation of the productive forces accompanies a material and spiritual emancipation for all mankind ; in each case, the driving energy of a class, struggling for class liberty, is the means by which this emancipation is accomplished. Therefore, the Communists stand in the great tradition of the English nation, the revolutionary tradition that expresses itself in philosophy and science, politics and poetry. It is the present group of millionaires, holding England in their grasp who retain from the past all that is least deserving and add to it still worse elements of their own devising.

A poet who died this year wrote in his best days

" We are the people of England, we have not spoken yet."

If that people were now to speak in words (as one day they shall speak in deeds), were to speak through the voice of their foremost fighters, surely, they would say to their rulers :

" We embody the great revolutionary traditions of English history, that history which you have made into an array of lifeless waxworks, a quarry for reactionary precedents, a Newgate Calendar gilded.

[2] " I hope even British respectability will not be overshocked if I use, in English as well as in so many other languages, the term, ' historical materialism,' to designate that view of the course of history, which seeks the ultimate cause and the great moving power of all important historic events in the economic development of society, in the changes in the modes of production and exchange, in the consequent division of society into distinct classes, and in the struggles of these classes against one another." (Engels: Preface to *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific.*)

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

" We have the traditions of the puritan fighters for liberty ; their consciousness of a duty to be done, of a task to be performed, is ours too. The traditions of the corrupt restoration of the riot of greed, speculation and robbery—that England of Lilliputians and Yahoos, portrayed by Swift—are faithfully maintained by you in the city and in the Parliament, in the questionable behaviour only this year of your Cabinet Ministers and Civil Service chiefs.

" Ours is the tradition of the great scientists, of the navigators who carried to other lands a flag of liberty—which you have made the symbol of imperialism, of plunder and robbery—of those who gave to the world a materialist philosophy, a political arithmetic, an example of self-government, and a poetry of Freedom. Yours is the tradition of philosophy and social science, enchained by rent, profit and interest, of cruel despotism imposed on India, and violent repression in England, of the policy of grab, national aggrandisement, and aggression. Ours is the English tradition of Fair Play : yours is the shame of Abyssinia, of the Hoare-Laval pact, of the dice loaded against Spain.

" The noble English tradition of the fight for liberty at home and abroad —we revive it. For a new class and a new day, we carry forward the fight. But you suppress the noble traditions of England. It is you who are supporting the fascist invaders of Spain, you who gleefully await the extinction of liberty in the Peninsula.

" We who have the tradition of suffrage for centuries, and now have universal suffrage won by struggle, we would gladly see the Spaniards have it too. But you talk of ' excesses.' If you had supported the Spanish government drawn from the suffrages of the people, as all your lip-service to democracy required, there would not have been any such excesses by the anarchists, of which your newspapers complain, and which they magnify, while they ignore the hundred-fold worse excesses of the fascist gangs. But for you, a workers' strike is ' excesses,' while the Black and Tans in Ireland were your example of ' law and order.'

" Your ' law and order.' Yet, even of that old Common Law, subjugated by you to the uses of capitalism, there are features that we can appreciate. Despite its forbidding features and medieval lumber, there is in it something left of the old pre-feudal personal freedom of local self-government, and, as Engels said, ' independence from all interference but that of the law courts, which on the continent has been lost during the period of absolute monarchy, and has nowhere been as yet fully recovered.' It is you who have twisted it, you who have made it a bye-word ' one Law for the Rich and another for the Poor.'

" We stand for the noble traditions of English letters ; in the first place, the fight for liberty of classes and nations ; and secondly, in the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

struggle to mitigate the lot of prisoners associated with the names of Fielding, Charles Dickens, Charles Reade, and many others down to the present day. But you have turned this tradition into a bogus liberty, the ' liberty ' beloved of the capitalists, the ' liberty ' to exploit, to dope, to oppress to the uttermost. And as for prisoners you who deny political prisoners their rights in England by denying their existence, whose record of flogging and maltreatment in prisons stains the annals of the last quarter century in England, Ireland and India, you who still use the cat-o-ninetails are faithful only to the worst traditions of cruelty and inhumanity.

" You dread the native revolutionary traditions of the English people. You malign them as ' foreign.' Because we appreciate what has been done in the U.S.S.R. as a new and still higher flight of liberty, you malign the U.S.S.R. and support the fascist rascality. But we warn you that whoever fights against our old liberty, or against this new liberty is bound to fall. For we are determined to make our country a Free and Merry England."

REPORTER IN SPAIN

Frank Pitcairn - - - 2/6

UNEMPLOYED STRUGGLES

Wal Hannington - - - 8/6

●

LAWRENCE AND WISHART

2 PARTON STREET, LONDON

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOK REVIEWS

" STEEL BATTALION."

Reporter in Spain. By Frank Pitcairn. Introduction by Ralph Bates. Lawrence and Wishart. pp. 141. 2s. 6d.

A BOOK this to sear the heart and prick the conscience, a book not easy to tuck away in a corner of the mind and forget.

Mr. Pitcairn served as a militiaman in the Steel Battalion of the Fifth Regiment, " the backbone of the Spanish people's fight for democracy." It was no doubt a terribly improper thing for a newspaper man to do. But, as the newspaper man quietly points out, if you are " a private in the front line you see things you can't see any other way."

Mr. Pitcairn writes in the quick passionate phrases of a man on the spot who shared the sufferings, excitements and dangers of a bitter campaign and had an instinctive understanding sympathy with his comrades-in-arms.

I have seen nowhere a more intimate and moving account of the desperate sacrifices these Spanish workers are making for the elementary rights of civilised man. It is a strange reflection to me, an English Radical, that these young Socialists, Liberal Republicans, Trade Unionists, Communists and Anarchists should now be giving their lives for simple human causes which English Radicals, long before Mr. Pitcairn was born, thought they had won for all time.

What a magnificent fighting spirit they have shown ; drilling with sticks and wooden planks instead of rifles ; and with knives and iron nails boldly attacking rebel forces armed with machine-guns, grenades and all the modern weapons of destruction which have reached Franco in ever-increasing numbers from the " non-intervening " Fascist Powers. Mr. Pitcairn gives a marvellous picture of the defence of a stony hilltop high above the Guadarrama plain, forming an angle of the Sierra front, by a pathetic little group of peasant militiamen battered by heavy artillery, harassed by continuous machine-gun fire on ground, bombed and machine-gunned again and again from the air by expert German pilots in German aeroplanes.

Time after time the members of this pitifully dwindling group anxiously asked their English friend when " the democratic countries " would stop the Fascist importation of arms or at least come to the aid of Spanish democrats by supplying them with the means to defend democracy. How could Mr. Pitcairn answer them ? He knew that there were millions of English men and women who were eager to help Spain. He could not have known then that the semi-official view—or the demi-semi-official view—subtly diffused in England was that the Spanish people did not want the ban on arms to be broken, that they really favoured " neutrality."

He knew already, however, all about the insidious pro-rebel propaganda in a section of the British Press and all about the tales of atrocity and " outrageous attacks " on the Church by the loyalist forces.

" You had only to twiddle the radio knobs," he writes, to hear these tales. You tuned in to Seville " and heard drunken General Queipo de Llano hiccupping out his endless ugly polemic against civilisation, progress and democracy."

Turn the knobs again and " here is Franco, there is Mola and there Cabanellas, all roaring into the microphone in a nightmare chorus of things to come, filling

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the air with the menace of the war-lords, the horror of great darkness, spitting fire and slaughter and slavery, the Brass Hats and the Inquisitors and the enemies of the people marching on."

Mr. Pitcairn disposes brusquely of some of the more grotesque fabrications of senseless cruelty on the part of the loyalists. But it would be a miracle if individual reprisals did not take place. I am certain they have taken place. Let us admit the discipline of the trade unionists and the "special discipline" of a people under arms. But no war is so cruel or rouses such fierce emotions as an internal conflict. It cannot be supposed, as one of their leaders acknowledged, that the militiamen have not been provoked at times beyond endurance as they heard of the frightful acts committed by the Fascists in territories held by them. But

> When hundreds upon hundreds of democratic leaders (said Andre y Manso, the Socialist deputy for Badajoz), are being tortured to death in towns and villages throughout the Fascist-controlled territory, when whole villages, whole districts, are being literally wiped out, solely to terrorise the rest of the population, I must say that I find it almost incomprehensible that anyone should dare to bring accusations of undue violence against us.

As for the priests and the churches, the pretence of neutrality is farcical. In the fighting on Sierras large numbers of priests have been captured by the loyalists with rifles in their hands. "There is scarcely a church in Spain of any strategic importance which has not been used as a fort or a machine-gun nest by the Fascists and the priests."

I am glad Mr. Pitcairn emphasises, though he does not sufficiently emphasise, the supineness of the Spanish Government before the revolt broke out. A few days after the elections I visited Spain and remained in Andalusia for several weeks. It was obvious long before I left that a Fascist coup was inevitable and that the attempt would be made before the new régime had been fully consolidated. It was equally obvious that the Government under-estimated the danger and had neither taken nor planned precautions against it.

Even so, the evidence is almost irresistible that but for the transportation of Moorish troops from Morocco and the importation of great quantities of arms and munitions from the Fascist countries, the Spanish democrats would have crushed the rebellion long ago. There lies the tragedy and there lies the shame of a great betrayal.

A. J. CUMMINGS.

A LIBERAL EXPOSES ITALIAN FASCISM.

Under the Axe of Fascism. Gaetano Salvemini. (A Left Book Club Choice.) Gollancz. pp. 446. 7s. 6d.

THIS book appears at a particularly opportune time. Fascism to-day is no longer of interest only to students of foreign politics nor even to those of left wing sympathies who have special reason to dread its advent here; fascism is openly seen as the enemy of domestic progress and international peace, and even the least discerning political observer must feel called upon to make a judgment on the fascist claims to his support.

For the formulation of such a judgment Professor Salvemini has contributed some invaluable material, the more useful, perhaps, for the reason that he himself is no zealous advocate of left wing politics, but a steady-going liberal with a hankering after pre-war conditions of *laissez faire*. Much of his discussion of the practical achievements of Mussolini in such realms as the social

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

services or housing takes the form of a well-justified comparison not between conditions to-day and those in 1919, but between what fascism has achieved and what democratic capitalism could in all probability have achieved if the fascists had not ousted it from power. The much boasted drainage schemes, hydro-electrification, and other ordinary measures of economic development in Italy are subjected to a critical analysis which enables the reader to see them in due proportion as the moderate accomplishments common to all industrial countries to-day and owing no special thanks to Mussolini and his régime.

The essential argument of Professor Salvemini's book is sound enough. He shows how the highly centralised state apparatus of Italy serves the interests of a small class of financiers and industrialists ; and how in an ever-intensifying crisis Mussolini, at the head of this narrow class state, is driven to desperate device after device to stave off disaster. Recent stages in his rake's progress have been the Abyssinian war and the renewed drive to armaments.

The beneficiaries of these policies are clearly seen. The workers, deprived of political liberty and regimented in fascist unions over which they have no control, are subjected to wage cuts, speeding up, and worsened conditions of life all round, while the only section of society for whom life is still tolerable in Italy is that possessed of wealth in the form of substantial investments, factories, or big landed estates.

The class character of fascism can be clearly deduced from the abundant information given in this carefully documented and wittily-written book. It is a store of useful facts, attractively presented and fully supported by quotations. It aims at a single objective ; to provide data about " one single phase " of the fascist dictatorship, " i.e., those institutions through which fascism claims to have solved the problem of the relations between capital and labour." But in the course of fulfilling that task the author has laid bare a very considerable portion of the dictatorship with which he is concerned.

The facts which Professor Salvemini reveals are not invalidated by his own political outlook and the shallow *obiter dicta* which he permits himself from time to time, implying that there is nothing to choose between fascist dictatorship and the rule of the workers in Russia. We can pass over his political naïveté for the sake of the help he renders towards an understanding of Italian capitalism in its imperialist stage.

L.W.

LENIN THE PATHFINDER.

Lenin's Selected Works.

Vol. 3—*The Revolution of* 1905-07. 630 pp.
Vol. 4.—*The Years of Reaction and Revival,* 1908-14. 448 pp.
Vol. 5.—*Imperialism and Imperialist War,* 1914-17. 392 pp.
Vol. 6.—*From Bourgeois Revolution to Proletarian Revolution,* 1917. 660 pp.
(Lawrence and Wishart.) Price 5s. each.

THESE four volumes show Lenin at the height of his magnificent powers as the greatest leader and expounder of Marxian theory and revolutionary strategy. He knew, and explained in a thousand ways, the many obstacles that capitalism would hurl against the workers in their struggle for class power. He showed that the Socialist revolution was unlike preceding revolutions. Previous revolutions had only transferred power from the hands of one propertied class to another propertied class. But the proletarian revolution challenges the whole system of private property as an instrument of class exploitation

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

services or housing takes the form of a well-justified comparison not between conditions to-day and those in 1919, but between what fascism has achieved and what democratic capitalism could in all probability have achieved if the fascists had not ousted it from power. The much boasted drainage schemes, hydro-electrification, and other ordinary measures of economic development in Italy are subjected to a critical analysis which enables the reader to see them in due proportion as the moderate accomplishments common to all industrial countries to-day and owing no special thanks to Mussolini and his régime.

The essential argument of Professor Salvemini's book is sound enough. He shows how the highly centralised state apparatus of Italy serves the interests of a small class of financiers and industrialists ; and how in an ever-intensifying crisis Mussolini, at the head of this narrow class state, is driven to desperate device after device to stave off disaster. Recent stages in his rake's progress have been the Abyssinian war and the renewed drive to armaments.

The beneficiaries of these policies are clearly seen. The workers, deprived of political liberty and regimented in fascist unions over which they have no control, are subjected to wage cuts, speeding up, and worsened conditions of life all round, while the only section of society for whom life is still tolerable in Italy is that possessed of wealth in the form of substantial investments, factories, or big landed estates.

The class character of fascism can be clearly deduced from the abundant information given in this carefully documented and wittily-written book. It is a store of useful facts, attractively presented and fully supported by quotations. It aims at a single objective ; to provide data about " one single phase " of the fascist dictatorship, " i.e., those institutions through which fascism claims to have solved the problem of the relations between capital and labour." But in the course of fulfilling that task the author has laid bare a very considerable portion of the dictatorship with which he is concerned.

The facts which Professor Salvemini reveals are not invalidated by his own political outlook and the shallow *obiter dicta* which he permits himself from time to time, implying that there is nothing to choose between fascist dictatorship and the rule of the workers in Russia. We can pass over his political naïveté for the sake of the help he renders towards an understanding of Italian capitalism in its imperialist stage.

L.W.

LENIN THE PATHFINDER.

Lenin's Selected Works.

Vol. 3.—*The Revolution of* 1905-07. 630 pp.
Vol. 4.—*The Years of Reaction and Revival*, 1908-14. 448 pp.
Vol. 5.—*Imperialism and Imperialist War*, 1914-17. 392 pp.
Vol. 6.—*From Bourgeois Revolution to Proletarian Revolution*, 1917. 660 pp.
(Lawrence and Wishart.) Price 5s. each.

THESE four volumes show Lenin at the height of his magnificent powers as the greatest leader and expounder of Marxian theory and revolutionary strategy. He knew, and explained in a thousand ways, the many obstacles that capitalism would hurl against the workers in their struggle for class power. He showed that the Socialist revolution was unlike preceding revolutions. Previous revolutions had only transferred power from the hands of one propertied class to another propertied class. But the proletarian revolution challenges the whole system of private property as an instrument of class exploitation

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and subjugation. This explains why the propertied interests, entrenched behind strong political and economic strongholds, denied to the workers, will defend their privileges with a cunning and ferocity unknown in previous class struggles or national wars. Despite this the struggle cannot be evaded because history, in many ways, is driving it forward.

Capitalism is being torn to pieces by its crises and contradictions, and has become both dangerous and impractical as a social system. By its wars and conflicts it not only impedes economic progress, but it now threatens to destroy the social heritage and uproot everything that humanity has achieved and created through centuries of relentless effort. The path to a practical social system, based on peace and economic planning, leads directly to an inescapable struggle against capitalism.

Thus, the urgent problem of the time is the working out of the ways and means for overthrowing capitalism and raising the masses to power, through the dictatorship of the proletariat, in order successfully to beat down the attack of the propertied interests—while going forward to the tasks of social reconstruction. To Lenin this question of power was of the utmost importance. It was in analysing it that he made his most important contributions to modern Marxist theory and tactics. He showed that the capture of power was not the final aim of the proletarian revolution—it was but the beginning of the last struggle against capitalism. He showed that the propertied interests would carry on the struggle in a hundred desperate ways, against the power of the workers. Beaten on the political field they would use every ounce of remaining influence in the economic sphere, and in every plane of social activity. Beaten at home they would seek, and secure, armed and financial help from capitalism abroad to try and defeat Socialism.

Lenin's far-sighted conception of the meaning of working-class power brought him into conflict with the leaders of the Second International. They had never faced the implications and problems attached to power. To them it meant a peaceful General Election ending in a parliamentary majority. Their case was clearly defined by J. Ramsay MacDonald when, as leader of the Labour Party and the I.L.P., he contemptuously declared that :

> A Parliamentary election will give us all the power that Lenin had to get by a revolution. (*Parliament and Revolution*, p. 92.)

This simple-simon flummery is still the inspiring guide to policy for the official leadership of the Labour Party. Lenin knew the value of parliamentary struggle, and the need for guarding and extending every democratic privilege. But he denounced those who imagined that the capitalist class would capitulate because they were defeated at a parliamentary election. He showed that such a policy of simplicity would lead to the betrayal of Socialism. The leaders of the Second International would not listen to Lenin. Now events are compelling them to listen to the jeers of renegades like J. R. MacDonald ; the attacks of Mussolini and Hitler ; and to the guns of General Franco trained upon the Spanish Cortes.

* * * * *

Lenin carefully explained, in great detail, the science of the leadership and strategy of the proletarian revolution. In doing this he patiently analysed the policies and actions of the outstanding leaders in the Russian and international Labour Movement. Superficial critics have stated that Lenin spent his time quarrelling with other socialists. Lenin, of course, was much too busy and active to quarrel with anyone for the mere pugnacious sake of a personal fight. What he did fight and expose was confusion. To him a confused Labour Movement was one incapable of combating capitalism. Confusion of thought and

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

policy could only lead to confused action and inevitable defeat. This onslaught upon confusionism was a task that Lenin inherited from Marx and Engels. In their day they waged mighty struggles against the many obscurantists, and wrote many of the classics of scientific socialism in the process. To Lenin polemics within the movement was one of the clarifying tasks of the day, and was of great practical significance. He declared :

> For the nearer we approach the time to fulfil our immediate political tasks, the more necessary does it become to understand these tasks thoroughly, and the more harmful become all ambiguity, leaving things unsaid and not thinking things out to their logical conclusion. (*Social-Democracy and the Provisional Revolutionary Government*, page 20, vol. III.)

There is not in the whole literature of Leninism one important contribution that was not of a polemical character. This shows that the essence of Leninism is not only a brilliant adaptation of Marxist theory to modern capitalism—it is something even more important ; it is the adaption of the Marxist weapon of daily struggle and practice to the changing conditions of modern capitalism. It is the utilising of every crisis and problem of the propertied interests as a means to forge a sword for the service of the masses.

Take, for example, the outstanding sections in the four volumes before us. In volume three there are the " Two Tactics of Social-Democracy " and the famous " Agrarian-Peasant Question in the Revolution." In volume four there is a brilliant analysis of the " National Question in the Period 1908-14." In volume five there is the classic of modern Marxism, " Imperialism," and also " The Collapse of the Second International." In volume six, which deals with the rapid development in 1917 that began with the downfall of the Tsar to the revolutionary triumph of the Bolsheviks, every article and speech is worthy of the most careful attention.

Not only are all these analyses polemical in character, but something more important is revealed. It is the dialectical nature of the various contributions. In volume three Lenin works out the tactics of *attack* because of the revolutionary ferment of the 1905 period. In volume four we pass to the period when reaction was strong and brutal during 1908-11. Here, under the blows of the Tsarist punitive expedition, Lenin emphasises the tactics of *defence* in order to preserve the revolutionary party and to give it a breathing space. In volume five we are in the war period and at the beginning of a new revolutionary upsurge. And here again the tactics change and preparations are made to drive the onslaught upon the Tsardom to something more tangible for the workers and peasants than a mere triumph for the bourgeoisie. Volume six covers the Kerensky period and reveals the helpless vacillations of right-wing Labourism in the service of the bourgeoisie and imperialism. Here the tactics of Leninism brilliantly exposes the reactionary impotence of Kerensky and consolidates all anti-capitalist and anti-war elements round the struggle of all power to the Soviets.

* * * * *

The underlying problem of all Lenin's strategy was that of the dictatorship of the proletariat. His struggle in 1905, within the movement, was to win support for the tactic of expanding the bourgeois revolution into the proletarian revolution. He showed that in the English bourgeois revolution, in the 17th century, the forces of the Levellers sought to carry the struggle further than Cromwell desired ; that in France, in 1789, the proletariat and those who followed Marat, and later Baboeuf, drove the militant side of the revolution much further than had been possible in England. In the revolutionary upheavals of 1848 when the workers appeared on the scene, in greater and better

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

organised formation, they made their influence felt. Thus, Lenin concluded, the Russian workers would be able to push the democratic revolution of the bourgeoisie forward to a higher stage—to the triumph of Socialism. It was in expounding this tactic that Lenin showed how the peasantry could be transformed into a most powerful ally of the proletariat. He argued :—

> The peasantry will inevitably become a bulwark of the revolution and the republic, for only a completely victorious revolution can give the peasantry *everything* in the sphere of agrarian reforms—*everything* that the peasants desire of which they dream, and of which they truly stand in need in order to raise themselves out of semi-serfdom . . . (*Two Tactics of Social-Democracy*. Vol. 3, p. 109.)

Lenin was able to furnish further data to support his contention regarding the triumph of the proletarian dictatorship. It had been assumed, by Trotsky and others, that it was impossible to build up Socialism in a single country because of the opposition of international capitalism. Lenin showed in " Imperialism, the Highest Stage in Capitalism,"—one of the greatest interpretations of modern Marxism—that owing to the internal contradictions of capitalism the various nations developed in an irregular and unequal manner. This leads to wars and internecine strife, with the result that the difficulties of each capitalist nation provides revolutionary opportunities for the working class.

In " Imperialism " Lenin also showed how the parasitic nature of capitalism drives the colonial masses to revolt. These uprisings can be utilised by the workers, in imperialist countries, for revolutionary purposes.

There is also a powerful reactionary element in the development of imperialism. This can be seen most clearly in its effect upon the right-wing Labour Movement. Just at some moment, in the crisis of capitalism, when courageous leadership could stir the masses to revolutionary action—just at that moment the right wing, by its hesitation and cowardice, plunges the Labour Movement into confusion and impotent panic. The proof of Lenin's thesis can be seen in Britain which is one of the most powerful imperialist States. At no time in the history of the Labour Movement has the official leadership given such open support to the nationalist and armament policy of imperialism. This is one of the most deplorable aspects of the parasitism engendered by imperialism. The spread of Leninism among the rank and file, with its demand for unity of action, is one of the best ways of fighting and defeating the national jingoism of the official leadership.

The test of Leninism, as of all theory, is in practice. The organising and consolidation of his revolutionary party. Its struggles and tactics resulting in the triumph of the Bolshevik revolution, and the later victories achieved in the Soviet Union—all give concrete vindication to Lenin's policy.

* * * * *

In addition to the brilliant contributions made by Lenin in these volumes, it is necessary to add that each book contains pages and pages of the most valuable explanatory notes. These are most useful and help to elucidate hundreds of points for the serious student of Leninism.

The volumes are well printed and strongly bound, and must have a place on the bookshelf of every Socialist fighter.

WILLIAM PAUL.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE HEALTH OF THE MOTHER.

Social Care of Motherhood. Prepared for the Committee Against Malnutrition, London. (Lawrence and Wishart.) pp. 28. 2d.

THE Committee against Malnutrition have prepared an admirable pamphlet entitled: The Social Care of Motherhood, with an introduction by Dame Louise McIlroy, lately Professor of Obstetrics at the London School of Medicine for Women. The pamphlet claims to be a simple guide to the problems of maternal care, maternal mortality and ill-health and the powers possessed by local authorities to deal with these matters. There is much done to-day to ensure the welfare of infants, but we hear nothing of maternal welfare; yet the two are intimately related. It is not only the question of maternal mortality which is important, but that of prevention of the ill-health and disablement which may result from an apparently normal pregnancy. Only healthy mothers can bear healthy children. We have learnt in the last few years that a healthy mother is a well-fed mother, that is, a mother who has the right kind of food not only for herself but also to provide for the growth of her baby. The right sorts of food and the reasons they are needed are set out in this pamphlet. Yet in spite of the fact that the nutrition of the expectant mother is recognised to be of paramount importance and therefore should be the concern of all who are interested in maternal welfare, the powers given to local authorities for dealing with the problem are permissive only. The result is that many local authorities take no steps whatever to see that pregnant and nursing mothers have adequate food. Few clinics supply anything but small quantities of milk. Where, however, the authorities have provided good midday meals, often with consideration for the needs of the toddlers who accompany their mothers, the benefit to the home as a whole has been most remarkable.

As well as the right sort of food the pamphlet emphasises the need of satisfactory home conditions, only too difficult to secure in the present state of overcrowding. To-day, the working woman has to do her housework and look after her other children till the new baby arrives—she will then have help for, at the most, a fortnight. Again there is permissive legislation allowing the local authorities to provide home helps—only too often no use is made of this provision.

Strictly medical problems, such as the services of midwives, doctors and maternity hospitals, are also discussed. Clearly the immediate and urgent necessity, which the pamphlet makes clear, is for such permissive legislation, as is already in existence enabling local authorities to provide for the care of motherhood, to be made compulsory.

Everyone can help to bring this about by discussing the need in any organisation to which they belong like Trade Unions, Women's Institutes, Women's Co-operative Guilds, forwarding recommendations to the right quarter, bringing pressure to bear on candidates both at municipal and parliamentary elections. Scientists have shown what should be done to improve the health of the mother in many respects—it is now for public opinion to force the official world to act on this knowledge. This pamphlet should prove of real value in helping the public to understand the problems involved.

JANET VAUGHAN.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A STILL DOMINANT TYPE.

Men, Movements and Myself. By Lord Snell. J. M. Dent and Sons. 18s.

AT the age of ten little Harry Snell was already working as a "day labourer" and trudging across the dark fields at six o'clock in the morning. Fifty-five years later Snell was raised to the peerage by his friend Ramsay MacDonald: to-day Lord Snell makes a highly respectable and decorous Labour Chairman of the London County Council.

Lord Snell's name is not very widely known in the working class. He is one of the elder statesmen, a gentleman of a mild and amiable disposition who does not hold pronounced views or violent opinions. At the age of seventy-one he looks back on the past and faces the future with "complete serenity." His book does not contain any stirring experiences or penetrating judgments. In fact, he regards Ramsay MacDonald with great esteem, Baldwin is "reliable, friendly and solid," Chamberlain "impeccably courteous and dignified," etc.

But this autobiography possesses a peculiar interest and value. It is a human document of the British Labour Movement written by a man who expresses the ideology of the still dominant type of labour leader. Snell writes with a mildness that contrasts strangely with the harshness of Citrine, but the views of both are basically the same. In so far as these leaders have a philosophy, all life is an ethical system based on abstract principles of justice and truth, and the task of the working-class is to assimilate these principles to become broad-minded and well educated and finally to end the evils of modern life with the aid of the cultured and progressive members of the ruling class. The class struggle either does not exist at all or is a product of prejudice, narrowness and the lack of culture.

Snell puts forward with a simple clarity these views of which he is the living embodiment. The agricultural labourer and public house potman became a devotee of the "great humanists," a refined speaker for the Ethical Society, and an apostle of uplift. He acknowledges his debt to Ruskin, Carlyle, Emerson and Mazzini. Referring to his work as a paid official of the Charity Organisation Society he notes "much of my reading during this period appeared to be unrelated to the problems of political and social life which I was endeavouring to face, but I later realised that it helped to form a basis and a background for my thoughts concerning them."

Snell is a well read man, but Marxism is a closed book to him and the background formed out of his wide reading lead only to a blind ignoring of the realities of the class struggle. He tells us that he "often avoided speaking on purely 'capital v. labour' and 'class war' subjects." With such a background it is not surprising to find him advocating a special brand of religion for the British Empire and affirming that what this monstrous system of colonial and class oppression "needs in order to unify its spirit, and to hold it firm in enthusiastic loyalty to a common purpose, is a religion, the main principles of which would appeal to all its separate parts—a religion which would interpret the idealism of the Britannic Alliance in such a way as to inspire and sustain the allegiance of all the peoples living under the British flag."

The Lord Snell who wrote these words was the Under-Secretary for India in the MacDonald Government, and administrator of the terror against the Indian people, a defender of the Meerut trial. The British bourgeoisie has certainly succeeded in turning simple workers into accomplished humbugs. And sincere ones at that.

The collapse of the Labour Government in 1931 left Snell in a state of bewilderment. He remained in the Labour Party but retained his affection and spiritual attachment to MacDonald. His chief justification for remaining in the Labour Party was that the absorption of the Labour Party in the National Government would

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have crushed the hopes of the masses who had created their own independent political force and " on the ruins of those hopes would immediately have arisen a powerful, irresponsible, and revolutionary Communist Party."

Snell writes little about events since 1931. He is an old man who decorates County Hall with his dignified presence, and so perhaps he has not noticed that the fight against the ideology for which he stands is firmly advancing, that the class struggle which he has always ignored is pushing itself rudely forward on the political stage and that the revolutionary Communist Party is rapidly gaining increased strength and influence.

W.R.

A CHALLENGE TO PRISON REFORMERS.

Walls Have Mouths. By W. F. R. Macartney. (A Left Book Club Choice) Gollancz. pp. 440. 10s. 6d.

THERE is no need to stress the fact that this book should be read. There is already every assurance that it is being read by people who matter, and that its contents are the subject of discussion in " high places."

Macartney has done an excellent job. To reproduce eight years of prison experience with such a wealth of detail makes heavy demands on memory. Macartney stored all his impressions and now presents them to us with a leavening of cynicism and humour. This is important. It shows that the administration did not succeed in " getting him down." This is the one clear thing that stands out in Prison administration : try it every way—use sentiment, religion, humiliation, mental torture or the cat—but " get him down."

Nothing else can explain the many-sided aspect of Prison administration. Macartney shows how it works in Parkhurst ; it is even more complicated in local prisons. Commissioners, governors, parsons, librarians, censors—the whole string right down to the rawest recruits in the Service fit into a scheme that aims at making the prisoner " feel his position."

Macartney deals almost exclusively with Convict prisons. An equally scathing exposure can be made of the Locals. Although a " convict," I served my sentence in a local prison, and was surprised to find that the great number of " old lags " preferred the " Moor " or Parkhurst to anything else.

But what about the Juvenile prisons ? It is a standing theme in the Service that Borstal is the best training centre for a career of crime. I have read somewhere that at least 80 per cent. of the lads who pass through Borstal come out embittered against the system and against society itself—with nothing in front of them but revenge, crime and more imprisonment.

In his epilogue to *Walls Have Mouths*, Compton Mackenzie says :

> I am not optimistic enough to believe that this book of Macartney's will win over any influential body of public opinion to express its determination that the problem of the long-term prisoners should be dealt with radically.

This is too tragic to be true. Already there is a large body of reformers who salve their consciences by saying that so long as you have Capitalism and crime, no radical change will take place in prison administration. This could be said of roads, playing fields, infant mortality, workers' compensation or safety in mines. Yet on all such questions we strive to get something done now. It must be the same with our prisons.

The job is more difficult. Millions fighting against the Means Test are likely to get results quicker than a few thousands plus their relatives and friends who are fighting for a sane prison system. Possibly there is no Government Department in which power is left so completely in the hands of permanent officials ; and without doubt there is less effort at seeking immediate remedies.

In 1933, I think, Ben Tillett proposed that prison officers should have spells of duty in the police force, and *vice-versa*.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I venture to say that everyone, and especially the prisoners, would recoil from such a possibility. The consolidated strength of the two branches would strain the system to breaking point.

Nevertheless, I am sure that something can be done. Macartney's effort was not merely to expose but to find redress. His book will be read from the top to the bottom of the Service. The vast majority of the higher officials will blush with shame. Benevolent old gentlemen, prison visitors, and lots of people in the Howard League will wag a serious head and contend that something should be done. But in general the tendency will be to let the storm blow past and then to settle down again to the snail-like progress in reform that Macartney has exposed and condemned.

The book, if it is anything, is a challenge. It proves beyond all argument that prison helps in our present social conditions to make criminals. It shows that the prison doors open to let out men and women who are broken and ruined—with one chance in a thousand of regaining social status, and handicapped still more by the effects of sustained and studied mental and physical cruelty.

It is not sufficient to have a big public for *Walls Have Mouths*. Nor is it enough to have it read in semi-secrecy by the Service. Its conclusions should be placed before every Member of Parliament. Its immediate proposals should be thrown from all angles at the Prison Commissioners. Above all, the task of getting remedies should be taken out of the hands of the pettifogging reformers of the stage-coach days by vigorous action on a wide scale.

Comparison with the worst days of the Czarist régime reflects badly on the British system. It is a short step backwards to the vicious and spiteful methods of the 16th and 17th centuries. Hitler has shown how quickly the reversal can be made. And unless prison reform is taken out of its present hands and the power of the Service governed by the pressure of public opinion, the stupid and spiteful system of to-day will persist.

GEORGE ALLISON.

SCRAP THE "SMALLER HOUSE" SYSTEM!

What's Wrong with Lancashire? By W. Rust. Collet's, 13/5 Hanging Ditch, Manchester. pp. 12. 1d.

THE advanced movement has now a growing mass of literature dealing with the problems of Britain as a whole, but all too few dealing with the special problems of particular areas. Here is a pamphlet which we hope heralds a new series covering each area of the country. All have problems clamouring for ventilation and for remedies to be suggested.

This pamphlet under review is actually not the first one out of Lancashire, but it is the first dealing with Lancashire as a whole. Comrade Rust has indeed made an excellent and most interesting job of it. Lancashire with its millions of workers, with all its hundred years of inherited skill, turning out products famous throughout the world for their excellence in the face of some of the most murderous exploitation and filthy working conditions, is now condemned by its capitalists to decay, to "setting a smaller house in order," as Comrade Rust points out how the *Manchester Guardian Commercial* paper has described it.

The author well proves that this need not be so, that armament production is no cure for decay; indeed it will lead to further decay, for as he so tersely puts it, if two thirds of the export trade was lost by the last war with all its "victories," what will the next war leave of the other third.

By advancing a programme of immediate needs and by working for an all-Lancashire conference to discuss and hammer it into shape, Comrade Rust believes that the first step can be taken to turn out the 45 "smaller house" Conservative M.P.s—did not they acquiesce in legalising the scrapping of 10 million cotton spindles?—and at the same time start the advance of a united Lancashire Labour Movement towards the overthrow of capitalism and the building of that ever "larger house," the workers alone can lead in organising.

H. R.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Financial Appeal

THE October issue of the LABOUR MONTHLY was sold out. We wish we could announce a record of a similar character for the Debt and Guarantee Funds. We have to admit though that, had it not been for a generous response from one supporter, the Debt Fund would have shown a very meagre total.

As it is, however, we are able to say that the amount of the Debt Fund this month again enables us to make another small hole in the accumulated debt, after filling in the gap between the sum received in monthly guarantees and the estimated monthly deficit of £22.

May we this month concentrate all attention on an effort to build the Guarantee Fund from its present total of £18 6s. 1d. up to the £22 of the monthly deficit so that every Debt Fund gift may solely be used to liquidate the old Debt. That attention should be concentrated in this direction is the more urgent because several of the guarantors may have to drop out at the end of the year and therefore in all likelihood £8 to £10 and not just under £4 will really be needed. The present amount guaranteed by the 17 existing guarantors averages 10s., though some pay considerably more, compensating for those who can only pay much less. Even if all could only pay a shilling a month, surely there are 160 to 200 readers who would be ready to do this so that the MONTHLY can continue to expand and so reach the point in circulation when the Guarantee Fund will be reduced to nothing and the MONTHLY will become self-supporting. The fact that this month the MONTHLY is sold out and that we feel confident in printing considerably more for November shows that this objective is well within a practical possibility.

Therefore, we would appeal to all to fill in the form overleaf, especially the sentence undertaking to guarantee a monthly payment.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DEBT FUND.

	£	s.	d.
Previously acknowledged	72	18	9
Solidarity, per S.R.T.	6	0	0
Proceeds of Sales, per F.W.B.	0	8	9
S.D., Cardiff	0	1	0
Warren, Surrey	0	1	0
K.C., British Columbia	0	4	0
A. A. Anderson, London, N.	0	2	6
Miss A. Reynolds, London, S.W.	0	13	0
Carried forward	80	9	0

	£	s.	d.
Brought forward	80	9	0
X.Y.Z.	0	2	6
D.E.G., Sydney, N.S.W.	0	10	0
W. O. D. Pierce, Dundee	0	3	0
A. E. Steward, British Columbia	0	1	2
C. Johnson, New Zealand	0	7	0
Bert Neville, London, W.	0	5	0
Anon., Prescot	1	0	0
	£82	17	8

GUARANTEE FUND.

(*Amount of Monthly Guarantee.*)

	£	s.	d.
Previously acknowledged	17	18	7
Anon., per A. E. G. H.	0	2	6
Bert Neville, London, W.	0	5	0
	£18	6	1

In addition, 6s. has been received from Tom Paine and 2s. from X.Y.Z. for the Guarantee Fund.

To the Manager, THE LABOUR MONTHLY, 7 John Street, London, W.C.1.

**In response to your appeal I enclose herewith the sum of* ..... *as a contribution to the* LABOUR MONTHLY *Debt Fund.*

**I promise to send the sum of* ..... *monthly to the Guarantee Fund until further notice and enclose a first instalment of* .....

**Strike out whichever sentence does not apply.*

Name .....

Address .....

Date ....

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

Hitler over Russia. Ernst Henri. (Dent.) 340 pp. 8s. 6d.

An Outline History of Unemployment. W. T. Colyer. (N.C.L.C. Publishing Society Ltd.) 79 pp. 1s.

Karl Marx—Man and Fighter. Boris Nicolaievsky and Otto Maenchen-Helfen. (Methuen.) 391 pp. 12s. 6d.

Under the Axe of Fascism. Gaetano Salvemini. (Gollancz.) 446 pp. 7s. 6d.

The Private Manufacture of Armaments. Vol. I. Philip Noel Baker, M.P. (Gollancz.) 574 pp. 18s.

Mr. Keynes and the Labour Movement. A. L. Rowse. (Macmillan & Co.) 68 pp. 2s. 6d.

New Writing. Vol. 2. Autumn. Edited by John Lehmann. (John Lane.) 245 pp. 6s.

The Zinoviev Trial. D. N. Pritt, K.C. (Victor Gollancz.) 39 pp. 3d.

Alternative to Rearmament. Jonathan Griffin. (Macmillan) 215 pp. 6s.

Food and the Family Budget. Engineers' Study Group on Economics. London. 48 pp. 3s. (cloth), 1s. 6d. (paper).

The Spanish Tragedy. E. Allison Peers. (Methuen.) 247 pp. 10s. 6d.

Which Way to Peace? Bertrand Russell. (Michael Joseph.) 224 pp. 7s. 6d.

This Final Crisis. Allen Hutt. Cheap Edition. (Gollancz.) 288 pp. 2s. 6d.

Les Matérialistes de L'Antiquité. Paul Nizan. (Editions Sociales Internationales, Paris.) 178 pp. 12f.

Half a Million Tramps. W. A. Gape. (Routledge.) 352 pp. 7s. 6d.

THINGS MOVE QUICKLY—

and **LABOUR MONTHLY** readers want to keep abreast of current events. The growth of Unity in France, Spain, Britain. The War moves of Fascism and the National Government. The developments in the struggle for higher wages and relief.

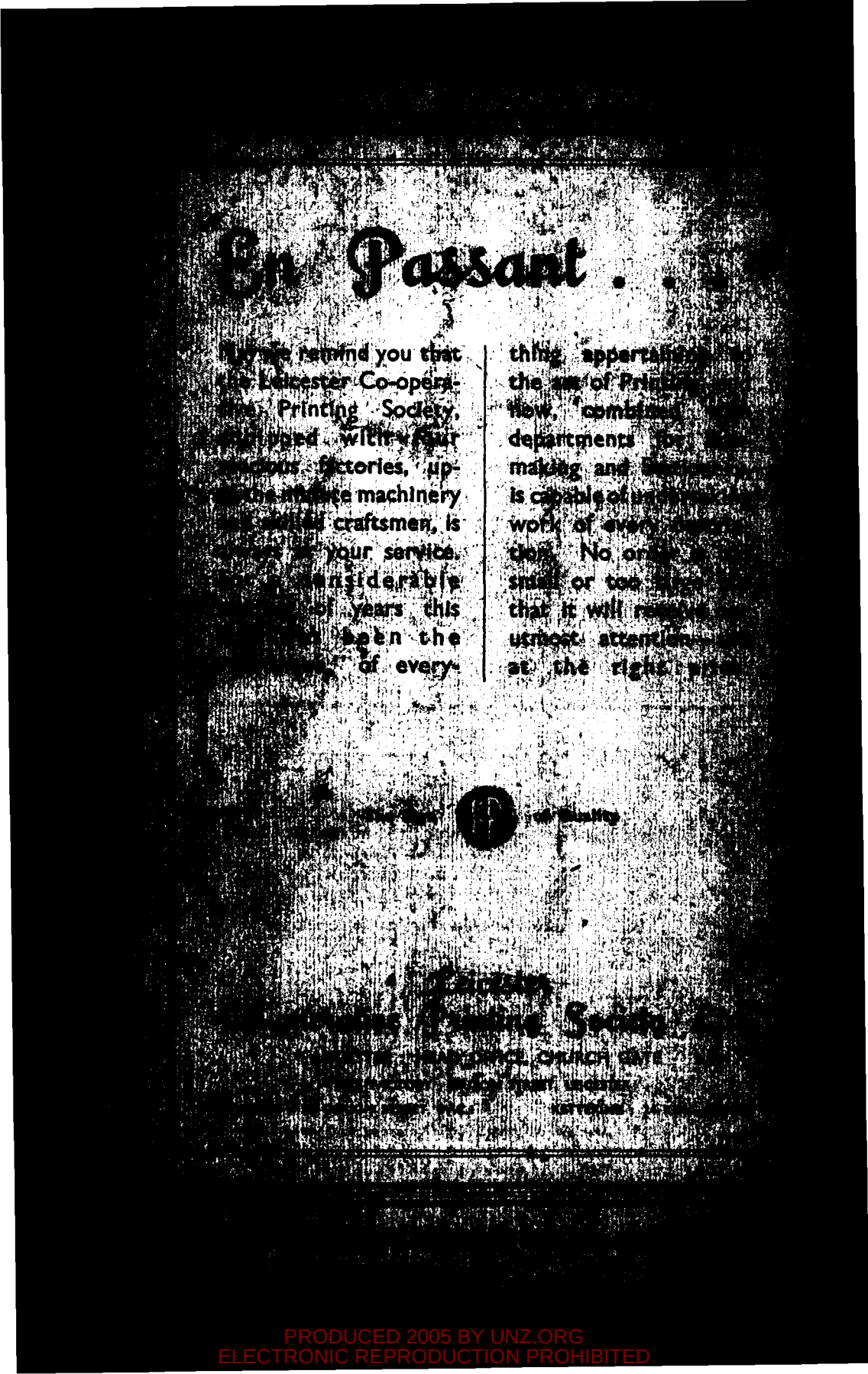
These things can only be followed in a **DAILY** newspaper!

AND THE ONLY PAPER WHICH KEEPS YOU FULLY INFORMED IS THE

DAILY WORKER

1d. per week from the "Daily Worker," Nelson Place, Cayton St., E.C.1., and from many Newsagents in all parts.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED